

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 6th December, 1940.

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR WILFRID JACKSON, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C.

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. J. S. Dash, Director of Agriculture.

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E., (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, K.C., (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, O.B.E., (Georgetown North).

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, Comptroller of Customs.

The Hon. N. M. MacLennan, Director of Medical Services.

The Hon. M. B. Laing, O.B.E., Commissioner of Labour and Local Government.

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education.

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E., (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (Georgetown South).

The Hon. J. I. de Aguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C., (Eastern Demerara).

The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North Western District).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 5th December, 1940, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPERS LAID.

The following document was laid on the table :—

Report of the Dairy Products Factory Committee (L.C. Paper No. 10/40)—The Colonial Secretary.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ACTIVITIES OF THE RICE MARKETING BOARD.

Mr. JACOB asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. G. D. Owen) laid over replies to the following questions :—

Q. 1. How many meetings have been held by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board from 1st November, 1939, to 31st July, 1940; and how many members were present at each of these meetings, giving the names of each of the members.

A. 1. The record of the meetings of the Board showing the attendance of members is available in the Secretariat and may be examined by the hon. Member.

Q. 2. How many persons were employed by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board on a monthly basis as at 1st January, 1940, giving the full names, addresses, previous employment

and experience of these employees, the position now held by each, together with the monthly salary paid to each of these employees.

Q. 3. Similar information to be supplied for the period as from 1st July, 1940.

A. 2 & 3. Lists of the employees of the Board on the monthly salaried staff on 1st January, 1940, and on 1st July, 1940, showing the names of the employees and the amount of salary paid to each employee are available in the Secretariat and may be examined by the hon. Member. The Board is unable to undertake to furnish information as to the addresses, previous employment and experience of these employees.

Q. 4. Is it a fact that 20,000 bags of rice have been bought by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board from Barbados recently for export to Trinidad? If so, at what price, and is the Board doing this business at a profit, if so how much, or at a loss of how much, bearing in mind that the Board contracted to sell 10,000 tons of rice for shipment to Trinidad by 30th September, 1940?

A. 4. Paragraphs 8, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28 of the Report of the Board for the period 1st April, 1940, to 30th September, 1940, contain full information regarding the transaction to which the hon. Member refers.

Q. 5. Will the Board consider the question of suspending all exports in view of the probable shortage of rice before the Autumn Crop is reaped, say, November/December, 1940, as soon as possible.

A. 5. Please see paragraph 20 of the Report of the Board for the period 1st April, 1940, to 30th September, 1940, which indicates the action which was taken by the Board.

Q. 6. Will the Board consider the advisability of not arranging to sell any rice, or entering into any contract in the future for export from date?

A. 6. The only method by which exports can be effected during the War is to arrange in advance for the supply of specific quantities of rice to specified markets. It is essential that the Board should endeavour to make suitable arrangements for exports on these lines.

Q. 7. Will Government consider the advisability of requesting the Colonial Auditor to examine and report on the Balance Sheet that has been issued by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board as at 31st March, 1940, particularly in regard to the following:—

- (a) Why no provision was made for depreciation of Plant and Machinery which is shown at cost?
- (b) Why no provision was made for Bad and Doubtful Debts?
- (c) Whether the actual stock of rice on hand was used for asset purposes and whether due allowance was made for loss in weight by wastage and by vermin?
- (d) Whether the report of the Auditors was "full and fair," and whether the Balance Sheet as printed exhibited a "true and correct view of the state of affairs of the Board"?

A. 7. With the approval of the Governor given under regulation 23 (2), Messrs. Fitzpatrick,

Graham and Company, Chartered Accountants, have been appointed the Board's Auditors.

The accounts of the Board have been audited by Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Graham and Company, and the Balance Sheet to which the hon. Member refers is certified by them. The Government does not consider that any further audit is necessary.

The Board reports that full information with respect to the matters referred to under (a), (b), (c) and (d) of this question was furnished the hon. Member at his request by letter dated 12th September, 1940, through the Chairman of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to confer power on the Georgetown Town Council to exempt or to exempt partially the owners of certain properties in the City from the liability to pay taxes or rates for a limited period.

—(*The Attorney-General*).

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to make provision for the transfer of the colonization reserve to the general revenue of the Colony.

—(*Mr. McDavid, Colonial Treasurer*).

A Bill intituled an Ordinance further to amend the Sea Defences Ordinance, Chapter 118, with respect to the removal from the foreshore by estate owners of the stumps of felled courida trees. —(*Mr. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences*).

Notice was given that at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bills be read the second time.

ESTIMATES, 1941.

The Council resumed consideration in Committee of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1941, which have been laid on the table.

AGRICULTURE.

EDIBLE OIL SUPPLY.

MR. PEER BACCHUS: Before the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) resumes his address, I am asking Your Excellency's indulgence to reply to the recrimination which was made when I was absent yesterday afternoon. I wish to reaffirm my statement that there is no shortage of edible oil in the Colony. I may state that the first shipment of copra that was imported was delivered to the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd. on the

first of October. During that month they received 196,838lbs. of copra and during November they further received 68,614lbs. making a total of 265,452lbs. for October and November. Between the 2nd and 3rd of this month they further received 37,449lbs. of copra, making a grand total of 302,901 lbs. which is capable of yielding not less than 520 drums of oil. From the day the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd. received that imported copra they have been manufacturing edible oil up to the present day at the rate of 10 drums per day. Taking the period of 30 working days, that gives us 330 drums as having been manufactured for delivery by that single concern, and with a further 600 drums imported into the Colony make a total supply of over 900 drums within a period of one and a half months. Besides the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd. there were other mills in operation during the same period, and all had oil to meet the normal demands of their customers. Take for instance the last 200 drums imported by the Board; the Board still has 10 drums in hand that can be sold to whoever is short of a supply. So far as the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd. are concerned, I understand they have met their normal orders from customers, and only yesterday they sold 15 drums ahead—10 to be delivered to-day and the remaining five drums to-morrow.

I have been in communication with several mills manufacturing oil, and among them are three who are prepared to deliver 35 drums if orders are placed. The situation has so changed, that during the period that there was a shortage the people who retailed oil went about seeking purchasers, but to-day it is the millers themselves who are going about seeking customers to take the oil which they have already manufactured. One manufacturer of deodorised oil told me that he had 20 drums and could not sell them during last week. I hope that instead of there being a scarcity this gentleman will be able to sell his oil. The situation is being improved day by day, and I just want to say to this Council that when I rise here to make a statement of fact I do so on 100 per cent. facts and not 75 per cent. (Laughter). I have got my information from the proprietors themselves, and so far as the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd. are concerned I have got

my information from one of the Attorneys—Mr. Montague White.

The hon. Member for North Western District said that the mills could not make any delivery. Even in his own case one could see there was no shortage, but just that precaution was being taken against householders fearing another shortage and purchasing more oil than they require for normal use. I was told by Mr. White this morning why the restriction was put on the sale of oil. He said that when the oil and copra came into the Colony the householders had become so scared by then, that those purchasing two pints per week wanted to increase their purchase by a gallon or two, and the restriction had to be placed so that no customer requiring edible oil should go without a supply. I think I have said sufficient to justify the statement I made yesterday, and to further justify it to-day if the hon. Member for North Western District would like to place an order for any quantity between 10 and 15 drums I would see it delivered to him.

Mr. JACOB: I have listened very attentively to all the audible words my hon. friend has spoken to-day, and the gist of my complaint remains unaffected. I complained that there was a scarcity or shortage of oil and I gave instances to show where the firm of Messrs. Wieting and Richter, Ltd., which control the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd., issued instructions on the 12th November that no customer is to get more than two pints of edible oil at a time. For fear of a shortage they further reduced the quantity to one pint on the 20th November, and last Saturday (November 30) they had no oil to deliver to retail customers at one of their branches. That is irrefutable. My hon. friend may have been supplied with figures in regard to drums and quantities. My complaint is that customers have been inconvenienced for the last two months and are still being inconvenienced. Nothing that the hon. Member has said this morning has touched on that point. Mr. Chapman of the firm of Messrs. Wieting and Richter, Ltd., gave me my information yesterday and my hon. friend has referred to Mr. White, one of the attorneys of that firm, as his informant. I cannot conceive that the officer who is actually in charge of the firm's distribution of oil would be incorrect in his statement, especially when I

had told him I was going to make use of the statement in this Council. It is for the public to judge whether Mr. Chapman has given the correct information or Mr. White in so far as the consumer is concerned. I am sorry my hon. friend was not in his seat yesterday. As a matter of fact some people are always wise after the event. The hon. Member went and got the information to bolster up his position to-day. I would like to state that this morning a gentleman who does not control the Demerara Oil and Cake Mills, Ltd., rang me up on the telephone and said that what the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. DeAguiar) and the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) stated in the Council yesterday and reported in the *Daily Argosy* was absolutely incorrect.

Item 1 (27)—Grading Inspector (\$1,440 to \$1,920 by \$120), \$1,920.

Mr. JACOB: When the Committee adjourned yesterday I was speaking under the item "Grading Inspector," and was making a plea to Government that it is a privilege and a right of hon. Members of this Council to ask questions and an obligation on the part of Government to answer those questions as correctly as possible. I do not know whether I am wrong in that understanding. I have complained on several occasions that replies to questions I have asked have never been satisfactory in the majority of cases and particularly in regard to the rice industry. Yesterday I made that complaint in regard to questions that were answered that day, and to-day I have to make the same complaint in regard to replies to questions listed on the Order Paper for to-day. I am not going to refer to all the questions, as the one expression "Replies unsatisfactory" is sufficient, but I am going to specifically refer to question No. 7:

Will Government consider the advisability of requesting the Colonial Auditor to examine and report on the Balance Sheet that has been issued by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board as a 2. " particularly in regard

- (a) Why no provision was made for the depreciation of Plant and Machinery which is shown at cost?
 (b) Why no provision was made for Bad and Doubtful Debts?
 (c) Whether the actual stock of rice on hand was used for asset purposes, and whether due allowance was made for loss in weight due to vermin?

The last paragraph of the reply says:

The Board reports that full information with respect to the matters referred to under (a), (b), (c) and (d) of this question was furnished the hon. Member at request by letter dated 12th September, 1940, through the Chairman of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee.

I have not got those replies.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you not received the letter?

Mr. JACOB: No, sir, I received no letter. It is known that I have resigned from that Committee. Before my resignation I did not receive the replies and up to this morning I have not received them. I have nothing further to say than to let that be recorded. This would have been an opportunity to discuss this matter. It is thoroughly against my conscience to be coming here day after day and making complaints and no heed taken of them. Perhaps, it is better I do not attend the meetings of this Council. I think so. I think also that several hon. Members, particularly among the Elected Members, would be very thankful if I do. I have, however, a duty to my country to perform and I propose to carry on as long as possible until it becomes very intolerable. If it is Government's wish that conditions should become so intolerable as to make me leave the Council in disgust, then I am prepared to do so. What is the reason for not giving satisfactory replies to legislative questions concerning a matter in which I have no personal interest, I cannot imagine:

I notice that in the Board's report, dated 31st March, 1940, an attempt was made to give a forecast as to the future. Page 6 of that report states: "Anticipated exportable surplus to 30th September, 1940,—30,000 tons." As I have said the figures in this report do not worth anything. The Board has had the opportunity to carry on for one year with full and absolute control of the industry; why no attempt has been made in its report dated 30th September, 1940 to give a forecast as to the future of the industry, I do not know. I endeavoured to plead with Government yesterday that you cannot accuse and abuse the people who are producing a certain commodity and expect them to co-operate with you. The Board, however, continues to do that.

The Board continues to ignore representations made to it. The Government itself does the same thing. Can this Government, therefore, expect the producer to cooperate with it?

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I regret having to interrupt the hon. Member. To a point of procedure, I want to know whether in the consideration of the Estimates it is not necessary for an hon. Member either to move the reduction or deletion of some item so as to have some substantive motion before the Council. We have under consideration these agricultural estimates and the hon. Member is talking on various items at random without any motion being before the Council.

Mr. JACOB: Let me interrupt to inform the hon. Member that I am speaking on the item "Rice Grading Inspector" and not at random.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Should the hon. Member not move a substantive motion either for its deletion or the reduction of the amount?

THE CHAIRMAN: It is quite possible that the hon. Member at the end of his observations will move a motion. I am assuming that is his purpose. It is usual in these financial debates to allow a certain amount of latitude. I am expecting that ultimately the motion will appear.

Mr. JACOB: To satisfy the hon. Member I move that the item be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can move the reduction of the salary!

Mr. JACOB: I think I will move that. As a matter of fact I had that in mind.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was assuming the motion will come at the end of the hon. Member's remarks.

Mr. JACOB: I move that the amount of the item be reduced by \$1. I do not know why the hon. Member has become so touchy this morning. I have the Attendance Register of the meetings of the Board. It shows that the hon. Member attended the meeting of the Board held on the 22nd November, 1939, skipped the meeting of the 29th November, attended the meeting of the 22nd December and skipped

the meetings of the 9th and 30th December, 1939; he attended on the 30th January, 1940, and again on the 16th but skipped the meetings of the 18th and 27th January, 7th, 16th and 24th February and then attended on the 2nd March; he skipped the meetings of the 7th, 16th and 27th March, 3rd, 10th, 17th and 29th April and then attended the meeting of the 8th May.

THE CHAIRMAN: With regard to what the hon. Member is reading out, am I to understand that it is in support of the motion that the salary of the Rice Grading Inspector be reduced?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Is the hon. Member urging that the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) should be the Rice Grading Inspector?

Mr. JACOB: I did not recommend that but I would urge that he should take the best advice possible and resign from the Board and so save himself from further criticism because he has not the time to attend to the work of the Board. The list of attendances that I have read out has shown that. I do not know if that regulation has been repealed whereunder if a member absents himself from three consecutive meetings of the Board without satisfactory excuse his seat *ipso facto* becomes vacant.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): That regulation has been repealed.

Mr. JACOB: Thank you. That may be well from Government's point of view. I have forgotten where I actually left off. (Laughter). I think I was discussing the question of estimates and that the Board has not given a forecast as to the future. That confirms my complaint that the Board still does not know what to do and if it had been differently constituted it might have been in a position to say some thing definite about the future. . . The Rice Producers' Advisory Committee recommended some time in May last that the personnel of the Board should be changed by at least 50 per cent. and, I think, the names of the members concerned were actually submitted. The Rice Producers' Advisory Committee, consisting of seventeen members who represent all parts of the Colony and are in close touch with growers, millers and others, made a

unanimous recommendation to Government that other persons be placed on the Board with more intimate knowledge of the industry, but Government has not seen fit to do that and instead has appointed two hon. Members of this Council—the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) in the place of the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) who has resigned and the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus)—and also Mr. Macnie, District Commissioner, to strengthen the Board. I think that was the term used. The Board is now composed of the hon. E. F. McDavid, Chairman; Mr. W. A. Macnie, the hon. Director of Agriculture, the hon. H. C. Humphrys, the hon. J. I. De Aguiar, and the hon. Peer Bacchus, Mr. H. G. Seaford, Mr. R. V. Evan Wong, and Mr. John Fernandes. I cast no reflection on the gentlemen concerned. In their respective spheres of life they are well suited for what they are doing, but this Board as constituted does not impress the rice producing community. It can be disputed and need not be accepted, but if you have a differently constituted Board the personnel of which meets with the approval of the rice producers and if there is confidence in the Board half of the troubles at present existing would be at an end. I have been asked by a large number of people and by representative bodies to make this special plea to Government that the Board be reconstituted. I do not want to make reference to individuals, but the people who had planted rice and who are planting rice now are not impressed with the composition of the Board, and it is in the best interest of the country and of its people, particularly the rice producing community, that it be changed. Some of those who are responsible have the idea that as the majority of the producers have come here as “coolies” they can be treated in any kind of fashion. I draw that to Government’s notice and also to the Board’s, and desire to point out again that while these “coolies” may seem very foolish and not well lettered they still have some sense and do realize what is good and what is not good for them. I plead in the interest of the rice producing community that this Board be reorganized, as not only they have no confidence also in the Board but very little confidence in the officers of the Board.

I have been supplied with a list of the

employees of the Board. If this list is published it will not impress the rice producing community at all. They are not impressed with the employees of the Board, with the composition of the Board and with Government’s attitude generally, and yet it is expected that the rice industry should prosper and everything should go on smoothly. I cannot understand that method of thinking. I think I have said sufficient and therefore will say nothing more, but if an acrimonious discussion follows I shall reply. I want to say further that that is what the Empire is fighting for at the present moment—the breaking down of dictatorship and the establishment of democracy. I do not know if my conception is different from that of others.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the liberty of discussion the hon. Member enjoys is not indicative of anything like dictatorship.

Mr. JACOB: I am not referring to myself. I think I can take care of myself. I plead on behalf of the rice producing community that some reorganization be carried out after a year of experiment with the Board. I do not wish it to be understood that I am not in favour of control. I am in favour of control of the right type with the right type of people being at the head of the control, and the right type of methods which will create confidence in the minds of the people you are endeavouring to help. I have pointed out clearly that they have not got that confidence, and as a matter of fact the posters recently sent out advising the people what they should do and what they should not do. The word “lies” being used, goes to prove that there must be some truth in what I say. I have said enough. I think I have displeased some of my hon. friends in keeping them very long here but, as I have said, I have a duty to perform. It is time that I express myself in language which is very easily understood not only by hon. Members of this Council but by the public at large. I want to say that it is no use trying to impress the people one way and not doing the things they require to be done in their interest. I do not want to say that in a different way, and so I will just leave it there. Unless and until Government secures the confidence of the rice producers the industry will continue to go down. It is not admitted that it has gone down through that. Other reasons have

been given such as drought and so on. That has contributed to some extent but the principal thing is lack of confidence. I am only asking that that confidence be restored.

Mr. LEE: Your Excellency, you were good enough to appoint me a member of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee, and in accepting that post in the interest of the industry I thought that I would have been able with my little experience of the industry, gained in my practice as a lawyer and in travelling around the country, to be of some help to Government. I have recently resigned from that Committee for reasons best known to myself and to Government. I would like to state here that I do not challenge the integrity or honest intentions of the members of the Rice Marketing Board, but when Government embarks on a commercial undertaking those men who are advising Government in any capacity so as to make it a success should be paid in order that their services would be always at the disposal of that commercial undertaking. Those gentlemen who undertake at the request of Government the membership of Boards and Committees endeavour in their spare time to give advice for the progress of the undertaking concerned. I am appealing to Government that that is not sufficient, much more time should be devoted in weighing the *pros* and *cons* of every question brought up, especially where the welfare of the undertaking is at stake.

In respect of the rice industry there is a case which cannot be disputed. A recommendation was made to the Rice Marketing Board that in the event of an appeal by a producer his rice should not be disposed of within seven days of the appeal, but in defiance of that recommendation appealing producers have been told that their rice has been used up by the Board. That is a matter which is creating dissatisfaction and discontent among the manufacturers and producers of rice. I think if that matter is brought forcibly to the notice of the Board that they would try in the interest of the industry to remedy it. It will be observed that I asked the following question: "Will Government state what is the estimated yield of rice in each county separately for the Autumn Crop of 1940?" and that the

answer given is "No reliable estimate has yet been prepared as reaping has not yet been completed, but a preliminary forecast prepared by the Department of Agriculture indicates a probable yield of approximately 30,000 tons." Your Excellency, I can assure you that the returns supplied by the Department of Agriculture are obtained from Agricultural Instructors who do not visit the areas concerned to obtain the correct estimate of yield. They know that the districts have so many acres of cultivation lands and all they do is to enquire of the chairmen of the districts the acreage actually under rice cultivation and from that make an estimate of what the yield would be per acre. That is the kind of returns sent to the Agricultural Department. I am asking that a careful inquiry be made into the returns of that Department and that as early as possible a correct estimate of the stock of rice or padi be obtained, because I am afraid, and I give due warning to this Government, that unless a proper second or Spring crop is planted there will be a shortage of rice in this Colony next year. I can do nothing more than tell this Council and Government that it is the duty of Government to make this enquiry very carefully and protect the workers of this Colony.

With respect to exploitation I must again say that if the members of the Rice Marketing Board were told about all these things they would not agree to them nor allow them to be done. Rice has been sent to the Board and graded as No. 3 but sold as No 1. Is that to the benefit of the producer? When the Board is questioned about it, one is told: "That is not your business, it is ours." I claim it is the producer's business because Government in order to protect the producer has given a margin of profit from the sales to cover the expense of the Board. It was decided that one-third of the profits should be reserved by the Board as the nucleus of a fund for the benefit of the industry. The producer, however, gets very little of the profits made. That is surely not a situation which will encourage the producers in this Colony, and with no irrigation and drainage for their lands how can they be expected to have confidence in the Board and in the Government when the industry is not being carried on in a proper manner? I can do no more than hope sincerely that

Your Excellency will cause a very careful enquiry to be made in order that profits be made by the producer and confidence thereby restored in the Board and Government.

There is another matter I would like to bring to Your Excellency's attention. During the recent drought there was a petition from the people on the Corentyne Coast that if water could be pumped to the rice fields at least 50 per cent. of the cultivation could be saved. The members of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee said that the water could be pumped. If Government did not know of it, the Rice Marketing Board knew. It was thought that those who are protecting the industry would have done something to relieve the situation, but nothing was done and the entire cultivation was lost. The poor farmers who relied on their crop to pay their rates were obliged to carry the loss over to the next year. Is that encouraging to the farmer? Similarly, if I may state here, the pest invasion which occurred to the coconut cultivation has caused much loss to the farmer. I am appealing to Your Excellency to give that petition your sympathetic consideration in the interest of the poor people who are burdened because of adverse circumstances. I do not say that the blame is on the part of Government, but if they are burdened how can they be expected to have the courage to carry on. They must be encouraged. I do not say you should increase the selling price of rice, but you should encourage the people to plant a second crop and so recover their loss. Any advice given to the Rice Marketing Board, I take it, is advice given to Government, but no heed is taken of such advice and the ills remain to the detriment of the producers who may have to seek other employment as a result. I leave that for Government to consider. My friend, the hon. Member for North Western District, has appealed to Your Excellency to reconstitute the Board. I know what the feeling of Government is on that point. Those gentlemen have served Government on the Board free, gratis and for nothing, and to the best of their ability, and Government feels it will be ingratitude to tell them to go like that.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are very much stronger reasons than that.

Mr. LEE: That is one reason I can surmise. It has been pointed out to the Board on several occasions that members do not give of their time and advice as they should. This industry wants people to give the best advice for its progress, and I am asking Government to consider carefully the question of reconstituting the Board with the best people to give the needed advice.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to be clear as to what the hon. Member has in mind. Is it that people will not give the best advice unless they are paid for it?

Mr. LEE: I do not say so. It is because they do not give of their whole time to the business of the Board that they do not know all the conditions affecting the industry.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. Member suggesting a whole time Board?

Mr. LEE: No, but at the same time it is desirable that the members should give as much time as they can afford. I am saying that they do not give all the time they can afford.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot follow your point.

Mr. LEE: This is a commercial undertaking. It must have men who will attend every meeting and take a keen interest in what is going on in the industry. With respect to the sales to the Board, there are complaints that producers do not get their cheque until some time after the sale. They are poor people and their accounts should be settled with the least delay, but instead of that they are made to go backward and forward for their money. It has caused dissatisfaction and friction, and I have been consulted and instructed to institute a charge against one member of the office of the Board for having made use of insulting language to a seller.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that charge against a member of the Board?

Mr. LEE: No, it is against a member of the staff. It is annoying to the people to be put off for the payment of their cheque. I do feel that if all these complaints are brought to the knowledge of

the Board they would certainly be put right. That is why I am saying that a reconstitution of the Board is absolutely necessary for the progress of the industry.

Dr. SINGH: I would just like to know what happens when rice produced in Essequibo and graded there as "super" is delivered to the Rice Marketing Board. Is it subjected to further grading? I have been told that is done and the owners are put to extra expense. I would like to hear from the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board if that is so.

Mr. WALCOTT: I have listened with interest to what has been said by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) and the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), and I cannot say that I have been in the least impressed. I had thought better of them and I had hoped when this Board started that these hon. Members would have done their utmost, if they had any patriotism in them, to help the Government and the Board in getting the people to understand and appreciate what is being done for them and that they would have encouraged the people to plant more and more because we have a war on. This Board was introduced as a war measure and the people of the Colony, especially those like the two hon. Members I have referred to, would be doing their duty to the Government and the country by helping the general public to understand the situation and by doing everything to work with, instead of against, the Government.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to a point of correction! I object strongly to the hon. Member saying that we have worked against this Government.

Mr. LEE: I may point out for the benefit of my hon. friend that I had appealed to Government for a loan bank to help the people in Wakenaam and Government has granted it. If he did not know that he knows it now.

Mr. WALCOTT: I hope there will be no further interruption. I do not state 75 per cent. facts. I state all facts.

Mr. LEE: My statement is a fact.

Mr. WALCOTT: These interruptions

leave me cold. I want to express my appreciation of the work done by the Board, the members of which have had a very difficult task to perform. Anyone with commonsense and fair judgment will realize what it is to organize a Board of this kind and to get everybody and everything into shape. I am not a member of the Board now and I do not wish to be a member, but I know the work that confronted the Board when it started. I think the hon. Colonial Treasurer as Chairman of Board should receive the highest appreciation from the public and especially those interested in the rice industry, but instead of that he is only being criticized adversely. I have never heard any favourable criticism of the Board by the two hon. Members who have spoken. When we consider that the Balance Sheet only shows a loss of \$1,600 after providing for \$8,000 loss on the purchase of rice from Barbados for the Trinidad sale, I think the Board has done marvellously well.

I have heard the prediction from many people who ought to know better that the Board would suffer a loss of \$40,000 in the first year, but I would say that the wish was father of the thought. The Board in the first year got up against a snag. It was obliged to do so. The Board might have got wrong people on it at the start, but as time went on things were got into shape. Many people came to me with complaints at that time and I told them what others should have done, and that is that they should be tolerant and the Board would function better next year than this year as it was new to the task assigned it. I told them to be patient and to go on planting. I am afraid they did not get that advice from other sources. Rice business, I know personally having been in it 42 years, is most difficult to handle. You have in many cases to deal with men uneducated but shrewd all the same, who are very interested in the business but, nevertheless, full of suspicion—I am afraid my hon. friends also have that suspicion—and it will take years to wear down that suspicion. The Marketing Board will wear it down, I hope, during this year. I am sure the Chairman of the Board has seen the pitfalls and will be in a better position to run it more satisfactorily than he has been able to do in the past.

With regard to the suggestion made by

the hon. Member for North Western District that no estimates for the future have been given in the Board's report, which he terms useless, the fact that estimates were given and worked upon last year is the cause of all the difficulty. The Agricultural Department has got to bear a certain amount of blame for that. The Department estimated a certain crop which turned out to be 22 per cent. less than the estimate. It therefore shows how much estimates are to be depended upon. Rice can change in a few weeks from a 45,000 tons crop to a 30,000 tons one. It just depends on whether you get rain at the reaping season. If you do, you would not get 50 per cent. of the crop. The only thing you can depend upon to make your sales and regulate or fix your price is the actual padi in the factory after reaping has been completed. It is difficult to get that, but men who are trained in the job can do it. I would say to the hon. Colonial Treasurer as Chairman of the Board that it would be well worth his while if after the crop is harvested and in the barn a thorough check be made before making any big-scale sales.

The hon. Member for North Western District has expressed disapproval of the Board and has suggested that 50 per cent. of the personnel of the Board be changed. I would be glad to know from him who he suggest should be put in their places. I have no doubt that if that Member and the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) were to be on the Board there would be a wonderful change, but I will not say what the change will be. The hon. Member for North Western District also referred to the treatment of "coolies"—I call them East Indians. There has been, I believe, a certain amount of dissatisfaction over the delay that these people have had in getting their money from the Board but, as I say, the thing is in its infancy and you must expect difficulties at the start. I hope, however, now that the Board has been going for a year all that would be finished with, and if the staff of the Board is not treating the public as they should be treated then it is for the members of the Board to discipline that staff and to dismiss the offenders if necessary. (Hear! Hear!!)

The hon. Member for Essequibo River

suggested that the Marketing Board should look after irrigation and drainage. That is not their business, and he ought to know that. It is the business of the Government to do that. They function purely as a Rice Marketing Board and have nothing to do with irrigation and drainage. It is a pity that hon. Members mix up the two things.

With regard to the complaints about the grading, yesterday the hon. Member for North Western District stated that a lot of rice came down, the colour of which was No. 3 and the breakage No. 1. I cannot imagine that rice with No. 3 colour and No. 1 breakage can make a No. 1 rice. He is asking for a compromise. That is so ridiculous to anybody who knows anything about rice, that it is hard for me to believe that the Rice Marketing Board can dare to attempt to sell No. 3 colour rice with No. 1 breakage as a No. 1 rice. No one in this Colony who eats rice would ever accept that.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to correct that. The Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board will not dispute that. It is a fact.

Mr. McDAVID: What is a fact?

Mr. JACOB: It is a fact that you took No. 3 colour rice, blended it with broken rice and sold it as No. 1, and then passed a regulation on the 26th October giving you the right to sell rice other than Super, A and B.

Mr. McDAVID: It is not a fact. I shall address the Council on that later.

Mr. JACOB: The rice was delivered by a miller and when he received the grading certificate, which is there for your inspection, it showed that the breakage was only 23.5 but it was classed as No. 3 on account of its colour. The miller received \$3.40 per bag from the Board and the rice was sent to a wharf and there blended with broken rice further reducing the grade and re-sold as no grade rice at \$4.50. The Board made a profit of more than \$1.10 per bag. That is what the producers object to—the Board should not make exorbitant profits from the sale of their produce.

Mr. WALCOTT: The certificate I have seen does not explain the situation in the

least. When the matter was stated yesterday, I made a careful note. The suggestion then was that the rice was graded as No. 1 broken and sold as No. 1. To-day I hear it was sold as no grade rice. That leaves me in the air. I do not know where I am. I thought you were selling on grade. I have been away for a few months and I suppose things have changed. From what the hon. Member for North Western District has just stated, I should consider that the Rice Marketing Board were mighty good merchants to manage to make \$1.10 per bag profit on that particular rice. I suppose the hon. Member is jealous that he could not make as much when handling the sale outside the Board. I do not wish to delay the Council any longer. I only wish to say and to plead with the two hon. Members to whom I have referred to try and honestly help the people, the Government and the Commonwealth of Nations in prosecuting this war to a successful issue by getting the people together—uniting them. If they spend a lot of their time in helping the people to understand the position and to play the game with Government and incidentally with themselves, they would be doing much better work than coming and expressing adverse opinion in this Council.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: As a member of the Rice Marketing Board I did not propose to speak but I have decided to do so for two reasons, both of which emanated from the remarks of the hon. Member for North Western District and the hon. Member for Essequibo River. I am not going to sound the praises of the Board. I leave that to others to do. The Board had a very difficult time and endeavoured to struggle through it. The hon. Member for North Western District has said that if a member has not attended the meetings of the Board regularly he could not give of his best to the Board—I wish to say that every member of that Board, I am perfectly sure, gives as much and more of his time to the business of the Board than he can possibly afford.

Mr. JACOB: I have never tried to convey that impression. I say the members are not informed; they do not know the technique of planting and marketing of rice.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: It is quite clear

what the hon. Member said. If a member is absent from any meetings of the Board, it is because he is unavoidably absent. He does give of his best and that honestly. When the hon. Member for Essequibo River said that the members of the Board are not giving their best advice he was either imputing dishonesty on the part of some members or he was unable to choose his words properly. I must ask him to say exactly what he does mean or to withdraw any allegation of improper conduct on the part of any member of the Board. I am not suggesting that he meant that, but if he does, then I am asking that he withdraw it. It is perfectly clear that this Board is serving a very useful purpose and I want emphatically to deny the suggestion that it has not the confidence of the rice community. I wish to say that there are certain members of that community in whose minds dissatisfaction has been engendered by certain persons, and those certain persons are known to certain Members of this Council. If those certain persons would only endeavour to get the rice people together, as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Walcott, has suggested, and co-operate with the Rice Marketing Board they would be contributing towards the effort in the war in which the Empire is at present engaged. But instead of that they come here and make hostile criticisms of the Board which is doing all it can to serve this country.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is difficult to understand the arguments of the hon. Member for North Western District and the hon. Member for Essequibo River. Their criticisms of the Rice Marketing Board may be in regard to the constitution or personnel of the Board. Is the criticism levelled by the hon. Members at the Board in relation to the price obtaining either for padi or rice? I take it, it is not, as the hon. Member for Essequibo River has definitely stated that he does not necessarily suggest that there should be an increase in the price of rice. With that I do not agree, but I think if we are going to have co-operation and, as suggested in Your Excellency's Speech, improved and increased production the remainder of the community may be able to stand the burden of another half cent on a pint of rice provided the producer or grower also obtains the benefit as well as the miller. But assuming, as I take it, that the

general criticism by the hon. Members is not directed to the question of price, then is it directed to the control of the industry—the second process of analysis? I take it that is not so, because of the fact that the hon. Member for North Western District has stated that he thinks there should be control. Then what are they criticizing the Board for? Is it, as I have indicated, the personnel of the Board? If that is so, then the same hon. Member has told us that he is here to tell us plainly in words what we are to do and not to do. He should therefore inform us and not keep us in the dark as to what is the personnel of the Board suggested by him, who are the members to be removed and who are to replace them.

Mr. JACOB: If I may interrupt the hon. Member, I made it perfectly clear—and also the hon. Member for Essequibo River—that the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee comprised of seventeen members representing the entire Colony made a unanimous recommendation when sixteen members were present that the personnel of the Board should be changed by 50 per cent. The names were not stated in the records of the Committee but were conveyed to the Chairman of the Board. I have repeated that three times between yesterday and to-day. The personnel of the Board is what the people have no confidence in.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is just the point to which I make reference that has got the hon. Member out of his seat. I am not concerned as to whether a general allegation is made against the Board or a general suggestion is made for a change of 50 per cent. of the personnel of the Board. I am asking the hon. Member to state specifically who he suggests should be removed from the Board, and who should take their places. Name them!

Mr. JACOB: I can do that, if it is the wish of the Council.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Are we to put it to the ballot to get the names of another lot? We must know something about it. I would ask the hon. Member, having changed the personnel of the Board, is it proposed to pay the members of the Board? We talk of increased cost of production and that the producer is not getting

enough. Where are the expenses of the Board to be paid from—general revenue or the rice industry? These criticisms may be all right or wrong, but let us have some constructive criticisms. Let us know where we are going to be when the change is made in so far as the crop is concerned. Perhaps some other persons may start to criticize the changed personnel of the Board. I quite agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Walcott, who states that if, as the hon. Member for Essequibo River has stated, the members of the staff of the Rice Marketing Board have been guilty of discourtesy to the public they should be taught, and that severely, that they are servants of the public. They are paid indirectly by the public, and I am sure the members of the Board will deal with them when such cases arise. Perhaps the hon. Members can enlighten this Council on what exactly are the points, whether the points I have indicated are the points on which they are levelling criticism at the Board or not, or whether they have in mind other points on which they criticize the Board.

I would like to know from the hon. Members for North Western District and Essequibo River whether they are in favour of a central rice mill being established in Essequibo, and whether that can be erected out of the Colonial Development Fund. Those are the sort of things to be brought to the Council so as to enable the Council to decide where the Board in its control of the industry is weak, whether the price is adequate or otherwise, whether the personnel of the Board is competent or, as suggested by the hon. Members, not giving of their best for gratuitous service. I do not know whether the hon. Members are suggesting that gratuitous service on the Board should be made remunerative and from that we will then be able to proceed one step further, and I ask whether the hon. Members are suggesting that from the payment of members of the Board and of public bodies of that kind there would be an attempt for payment for their services rendered round the table of this Council. I do not know whether that is in the offing. If that is so, I am not in favour of it. I ask the hon. Members to declare openly whether they are in favour of it, thereby increasing the expenses of an already overburdened community with taxation in order to meet

the present crisis, which is as much concern to us sitting here as to those actively engaged in the fighting forces in the United Kingdom to-day.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: When the hon. Member for North Western District began his usual discussion on the rice industry, I for private reasons had to leave this Council Chamber, and I understand my absence was commented upon by the hon. Member during the course of his remarks. Perhaps I may take this opportunity of informing him that one of the reasons why I left the Council Chamber was that I have become accustomed to hearing him on this particular subject repeating himself and quoting the same figures on so many occasions that I can almost venture to leave the Chamber when he is speaking and practically reproduce a verbatim report of all he has said. It is not unusual for us to sit here and hear the hon. Member accuse Government of ruining the rice industry. It is not unusual for us to listen to the hon. Member's attacks on the personnel of the Rice Marketing Board. We have heard that over and over again. The hon. Member has had so many opportunities during the course of the several speeches he has made on the subject to advise Government and the Board as to how to make the conditions of those engaged in the rice industry and their well-being much happier than I presume they are at the moment, and yet he seems to fail in that duty.

Speaking as a member of the Board, though I am only quite recently a member, I would like to inform the hon. Member that I prefer to be judged by the more responsible members of the community as regards my action on that Board than by the hon. Member. What has the Board done to bring about this wanton attack on its personnel? The hon. Member has failed to put forward any reasons. He has very glibly given us minor details—one instance being of a man who sold some rice in New Amsterdam over which there was some difficulty. The hon. Member failed to inform this Council—and I am going to refer to it because he referred to it in another place before—that when the matter was brought to the notice of the authorities concerned the situation was remedied. That is to say—

Mr. JACOB: I have to correct the hon.

Member. It is regrettable I have to rise. He left this Council Chamber when I was speaking. He presumes I had given figures. That presumption is incorrect. The presumption is that I did not refer to the fact that the matter was remedied.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry the hon. Member does not seem to understand me. I think he suffers from the way in which he says I confuse his words. He mentioned that yesterday. He referred to it in another place and on that occasion he directly charged the Board for doing something which in fact was not done. I understand he referred to the question again—

Mr. JACOB: To a point of order! Anything discussed at another place should not be brought in here.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: On the question of procedure there is something more I would like to tell the hon. Member. There is very little he can teach me on the question of procedure. For example, this morning in the Council I was hoping the hon. Member would have been told it was not the correct thing to do to refer to questions tabled and the answers given him and to deal with them in the way he was doing unless he wanted it to appear that he was making a lengthy speech. In the course of his remarks the hon. Member asked what forecast the Board has given for next year? He claimed that the Board has failed in the report published to make any forecast. I do not know what forecast the hon. Member was referring to. I do not know whether he wants the Board to forecast whether there will be a good Spring crop next year and whether it will be 10,000 tons. I do not know whether that is what he had in mind. If he wants a forecast of the weather, perhaps he may refer the matter to the hon. Member who, I regret, is not in his seat to-day on account of illness because he could tell us with a certain amount of precision when rain is going to fall and when the weather is going to be hot. I have told the hon. Member for North Western District before, and I must repeat it again to-day, that the Rice Marketing Board by its very name is a rice marketing organization. Whatever rice is delivered to the Board, if the Board sells it and at a reasonable price it has fulfilled its object. The hon.

Member has not told us there was rice in the country for which a market was not obtained.

Mr. JACOB : They have oversold !

Mr. DE AGUIAR : Even if they have oversold the hon. Member himself has in his business oversold rice. If he did not then I am sorry to say that he is not a businessman. I am sure that in his own business when he dealt with rice he sold rice that he never had, but the rice had to be obtained afterwards and which in some instances he even failed to obtain and had to call off the contract. There is nothing irregular about that. That is regular commercial practice. There is one point the hon. Member said that rather interested me a great deal, and I was hoping to learn something from his lips, and that was when he referred to the fact that there is a good deal of invested money in the industry that is uncollectable owing to control. I made a note of the words when he was uttering them, and I was hoping he would have enlightened me a little more on that subject because I think the hon. Member knows that my firm—

Mr. JACOB : My hon. friend was not present yesterday but yet he states he noted down what I said then. I have said it over and over again that I am not against control.

THE CHAIRMAN : "There was a good deal of invested money which it was impossible to collect owing to control." My recollection is that the hon. Member did make that statement. I do not think the time of the Council should be continuously wasted by unnecessary interruptions.

Mr. DE AGUIAR : I am sure I am correct. At the time he uttered those words I made a note of them, and for the benefit of the hon. Member I may state that the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Peer Bacchus) has a similar note. The note reads : "A large sum of invested money in the industry which is uncollectable owing to control." I was saying, I was hoping the hon. Member would have continued and pointed out to this Council—I think Government would certainly be interested and I was very interested to find out—in what way the money invested by the

people was uncollectable owing to control. I wanted to be educated on that, as my experience of it is entirely different from that of the hon. Member. If the hon. Member desires what had existed in the past to continue and in that way satisfy himself that any money he personally might have had invested in the industry is protected, then the hon. Member is only advocating his own cause. Does the hon. Member say that when these poor unfortunate rice millers and dealers used to arrive at the Georgetown Railway Station and the Georgetown Steamer Stelling with a consignment of rice and had to be running hither and thither trying to find a purchaser, who on the other hand was trying to cut the price down, is a happy situation ? The position is entirely different now. A man brings his rice to town, goes to the Board and knows what price he is going to get provided the quality of his rice falls within the specified grade. There is no comparison between the two conditions.

Just at this stage I desire to make a brief reference. We are all making comparisons and I think the comparison I am going to make in this case will be quite appropriate. It is true that as a result of pressure of work on the staff there must be some slight delay in obtaining payments for rice, but how does that compare with the man who is trying for two or three days to sell his rice and until he finds a purchaser cannot leave town for his home, and then he does not know how much he is going to get for his rice. It seems to me that in the one case the man who is dealing with the Board is in a better position as it is only a question of waiting for the actual money to be put into his hands, while in the other case we know what degree of uncertainty there is in respect of the other man. The delay complained about is unavoidable. It is all very well and good when one is dealing with one individual. It is very easy to despatch that individual at a moment's notice, but it must be remembered that the Rice Marketing Board is an organization dealing with several persons carrying rice there. As one of the members of the Board I can assure you that a great number of cheques has to be signed and a number of other things to be done, all of which take time. I would like to assure the hon. Member and those who spoke of delay that every effort is being made to minimize

v the delay, and it can safely be said that at the present time there is a great deal of improvement in that respect.

I was going to deal with the remarks made that members of the Board should be paid for their services, but that was so well dealt with by my hon. friends, the Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) and the Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight), that I would be trespassing too much on the time of the Council if I express my additional views on the subject. But I would like to say that I heartily endorse all that they have said. As regards the industry as a whole, I am going to leave alone the other criticisms at the moment. I am not concerned about that, owing to the fact that they came only from the lips of the hon. Member for North Western District and the hon. Member for Essequibo River. Nothing that they said would give us another grain of rice than we have to-day. I challenge any of them to dispute that statement. I am going to implore Government to make every effort that is possible to see that the Agricultural Department exert special effort to ensure a very large, or as large as possible, Spring crop next year. I know that a great deal depends on weather conditions, but, nevertheless, I think it would be folly merely to sit down and say: "Are we going to get rain next month or are we not going to get rain?" I think we should make our plans, weather or no weather, for the planting of a bumper Spring crop. There are other reasons apart from the good that it will do to the growers and millers and the inhabitants of the Colony. I am looking upon it that we have, as the hon. Mr. Walcott said, to make every effort towards that end. I know the demand there is for rice.

I was surprised to hear the same hon. Members saying that we should not export rice. I was painfully surprised as there are so many reasons against such a statement. First of all, are we going to abandon the markets we have worked so hard to get? What is even more important at this time, are we going to allow our brothers in the West Indies to go without food? I have never in all my life heard hon. Members make such a statement without giving the matter the full consideration that it deserves. I have no desire to prolong this discussion further,

except to conclude by saying that as a member of the Board I have endeavoured to do what I can in the interest of the industry and to repeat that I prefer to be judged by the more responsible members of the community than by the several hon. Members who have spoken against the Board.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to correct the statement about monies remaining uncollectable. I have said it over and over again and I am going to repeat it once more, that by the present method of control production has gone down considerably and monies outstanding cannot be collected. If the hon. Member cannot understand that, it is a matter for him. My hon. friend has put forward the astounding statement that rice should be exported. I do not wish to refer to the hon. Member's business. I want to ask if he is confirming the statement that we should export our rice and import Indian rice here for re-export, as was done in Barbados resulting in a loss of \$8,000 in one single transaction. If that is what the hon. Member has in mind as a member of the Board, then my opinion of him is changed considerably and he should be relieved of his appointment on that Board. If it is the opinion that in this Colony we should export all our copra and oil and then import copra and oil, export all our rice and then import rice for local consumption then, I think, we are doing very well indeed. Although the hon. Member for Essequibo River and myself have tried to point out that you should never export until after you have made sure that you have adequate supplies in hand for local consumption, yet it is held that we say you should not export. Every time the hon. Member gets up he endeavours to confuse my remarks. He says it took two or three days to sell in the past.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I said nothing of the kind. The hon. Member is suffering from confusion of thought. I said if it takes two or three days—

Mr. JACOB: It is taking more than that on some occasions. In the past a man brought his rice to Georgetown and could have left for his home the following day or the same day. Those are minor complaints. I am not referring to that so much now. One hon. Member referred to

the fact that we should name those who should be removed from the Board. If it is the wish of the Council we can do that. I have no objection.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take strong objection to hon. Members introducing personalities into the debate.

Mr. JACOB: That is why I did not name them. It is not what the hon. Member for Essequibo River and myself want, it is the unanimous recommendation of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee. We felt that if the personnel of the Board is changed there would be confidence in the Board.

Mr. LEE: The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) referred to his appointment as a member of the Rice Marketing Board. To whom was it due? It was due to the recommendation of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee. That Committee advised Government that the industry required on the Board more experienced men in marketing, and his appointment was the outcome of that. Perhaps he does not know that. Does the hon. Member for Central Demerara say that nobody can hurl criticism at him or at the Board since he and the other two members were appointed? I am saying that whilst I was on the Advisory Committee it was there held that certain members of the Board could not afford the time or were not giving of their best to the Board. That was discussed by the Committee, and that is how the recommendation came about. I personally felt from what was said there, that the recommendation should be made.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Is the hon. Member making another speech or a correction? He is perfectly entitled to make a correction.

Mr. LEE: I am correcting a statement made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) that I should be afforded an opportunity of withdrawing certain statements I made. I would like to tell him that certain statements were made at a meeting of a certain Committee which led that Committee to arrive at that conclusion. I can come to no other conclusion than that certain members of the Board were not giving of their best.

THE CHAIRMAN: What the hon. Member means is that as members of the Board they are entitled to protection from imputations on their motives.

Mr. LEE: It is said that certain Members of the Board were absent from the meetings of the Board and the papers were taken to them only to be signed. They signed the papers without even knowing what discussion had taken place on them. If they cannot pursue any information given to the Board for the benefit of the industry, it is logical to conclude that they are not giving of their best. If the attendance at meetings of the Board is gone into it would be seen that many of the members were absent on several occasions, when, perhaps, discussion on important issues took place. When I made reference to the increasing of the price, which the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) queries, I meant the sale price.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not the purchase price! You meant there should be a bigger margin?

Mr. LEE: The lowest price should be \$1.50.

THE CHAIRMAN: It seems impossible to get the hon. Member to understand that \$1.20 is the minimum price.

Mr. LEE: I am saying that in respect of the minimum price it should be \$1.50. If regulations are issued in respect of that it would be an encouragement to the producers.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is an increase of the purchase price?

Mr. LEE: It depends on the grade of the rice produced. At the present moment, Your Excellency, the Board is taking No. 3 rice and selling it at \$4.50. If producers are encouraged there will be greater areas under rice cultivation. I would like to correct the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara. In November, 1939, the hon. Member for North Western District and myself informed Government that there would be a shortage and the Board should not export the quantity which it expected to do. If that information was brought to the notice of the Board I am positive the members of the Board would

have enquired into it. That was not done and as a result there was a loss of \$8,000. In the face of that must we sit still and say the Board is carrying on in the best interest of the industry? We are saying that the facts are not properly put before the Board, and that is how the members cannot give their best advice.

Mr. GONSALVES: I wish to make an earnest appeal to hon. Members who have spoken on this matter. I agree that rice is a very popular diet, everyone likes it. We are getting on to the adjournment and we have had a lot of it. What I object to is that when we get home we will not be able to eat it. (Laughter). Let us get on to something else. It seems difficult to know when the hon. Member for Essequibo River has finished his speech. I do appeal to hon. Members to let us get a move on.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I would like to get on to something else, and that is to make reference to Your Excellency's very interesting speech at the opening of the Annual Session. The extract I wish to refer to is that relating to better irrigation facilities. In your well considered address Your Excellency stated:

I think that the lessons of the recent drought have served to impress on us forcibly the urgent need of better irrigation facilities, both to provide for the extension of the cultivable areas and to improve the productive capacity of lands now under occupation.

This is the point I wish to lay particular emphasis upon:

There are many demands from various parts of the country for improvements of this kind. They cannot all be met, and in the selection of plans to which the very limited funds available can first be applied it is essential to concentrate on those areas where the extent and quality of the land to be improved and the numbers of persons to be benefited promise the fullest and earliest return for the outlay to be undertaken.....

A good deal of remarks have been made under this item "Rice Grading Officer," but I have not yet heard one word said which will improve the position of the producers of that particular commodity. One hon. Member referred in very general terms to drainage and irrigation. That is a plea which has been put forward to this Government many years ago.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The hon. Member

has forgotten that I suggested a half cent per pint more to the consumer, which automatically means an increased price to the producer.

Mr. LUCKHOO: It was such a small increase that I did not take note of it at the time. If the hon. Member thinks the industry will improve by giving the producers a half cent per pint more, that is a matter for the Competent Authority to decide. It is quite capable of advising Government on that particular point. What I do wish to advise this Council is that steps should be taken to improve the position of the active producers of this commodity. Government has done its part. There has been inaugurated a drainage system in various parts of the Colony. I know that on the Corentyne attention has been paid to the drainage of those lands, and I am hoping that Government will follow that up by having introduced some irrigation scheme whereby certain areas may be benefited. We all know the cost of irrigation. That point has been very clearly brought home to this Council by one hon. Member, and it is not my desire to urge Government to embark upon a wholesale scheme without first counting the cost and whether it would be an economical proposition to adopt. But this I can say, and probably Government may take a note of it, there are certain areas on the Corentyne that need attention. I believe representation may follow soon on this particular point with respect to the surveying of the areas between Nos. 66 and 74, a very healthy rice growing district, where the suggestion is made that by having a sluice put down in that particular area it will be the means of controlling and conserving the water supply from the savannah lands. A proposal of that sort should be carefully examined by Government before embarking upon it. During the recent drought I may mention, Your Excellency, there has been a great deal of unrest among certain inhabitants in the County of Berbice, particularly at the time when the Control Board started to reconstruct a number of sluices.

Also there has been complaint as to the price of the commodity sent to Georgetown, but that little bit of trouble was cured in no time by the initiative of the Board in taking proper steps to have *chèques* made out to the various pro-

prietors so that payment is made as quickly as possible. I happened to be on the Marketing Board at the time, and I devoted much time to its work. I make no apology for that. What I am deeply concerned about is the progress of this particular industry among a class of people, who by their own initiative have been the pioneers of this industry. They are the people we should look to assist in every possible way, and we can only do that by offering them every facility for growing rice and so improve the production in this particular respect. It is very unfortunate at times to hear all kinds of comments, some of them having actually no bearing. Our time is valuable in this Council, and repetition of remarks from time to time is a waste of time, unless some constructive criticism is brought to bear on a particular question.

We all admit that British Guiana is undoubtedly a Colony with great agricultural possibilities, and the importance of agriculture cannot be too frequently emphasized in this Council. The farmers, I believe, have done their best in the past; they have suffered bitterly at one time by too much water and at another time by none at all. Steps are being taken now by Government to improve those conditions. It is advisable on the part of Government to embark on no wholesale scheme unless it knows what the cost will be and the economic value of the land in question. I feel sure the Agricultural Department will do its best in that direction. We have Agricultural Instructors on the Corentyne who are trying to educate the people along the right lines; they move about the people and encourage them. I do hope hon. Members of Council will take the opportunity of going around their constituencies and advising the people in the matter. To make open remarks condemning in entirety the Board, which exists for a good purpose and is conducted by a Chairman who is a man of great ability, it seems to me to be very poor gratitude for the help which is so brilliantly and generously given on behalf of the Colony. I feel sure that on these Boards where men's services are given free and on which they are invited to serve, the members do their work without any idea of gaining popular applause. If one is not actuated by sincere motives to be of benefit to the community he must stay outside.

Some people have their own axe to grind in attempting to seek control of a certain industry and will advocate a change, but that is not the way to act if you are going to help the Colony as a whole. Let us be sincere in all we do, and not allow selfish motives to be introduced in the discussions we have in this Council.

I wish to make these remarks because I feel that sometimes hon. Members, who are members of Boards, are being viciously attacked by others whose contributions to the debates when a proper assessment is made of the results are found to be worth nothing at all. I do hope that the promise Your Excellency has made and your pronouncement on the drainage facility will be given attention. I shall certainly encourage the people on the Corentyne to be heartened by what Your Excellency has said. If it is possible for anything to be done to help the people reap what they have sown, Your Excellency will be achieving a great deal. There is a long stretch of land from Lancaster to No. 64 on which there was not one blade of grass during the drought, but the people there are imbued with the desire to carry on the industry; they are undaunted and are resolved to do so. If Government provides free distribution of padi in those areas affected by the drought, Your Excellency will gain the goodwill of the people in that district.

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.—

Mr. WOOLFORD was present.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): Sir, the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) has achieved another remarkable performance, just as he did in August last when he managed to speak on the rice industry in this Colony for over an hour and a half and mentioned the word "drought" only once, and that in the very last sentence. That is all the more remarkable when one remembers that he appeared to be attacking or criticizing the Rice Marketing Board because it failed to export the quantity of rice which had originally been estimated, and at the same time and practically in the same breath, he was warning the Board not to export any more rice until certain conditions had been fulfilled. I should like

to be generous and put that down to self-deception, but I am afraid it is not that. It is an almost wicked attempt to draw false conclusions as to what has led to the present position. The hon. Member was at pains to point out that he is not against control, yet it seems curious that he has got himself into a position that he is almost Public Enemy No. 1 in regard to the existence of control and the existence of the Board. I sometimes wonder how he got himself in that position, and why he cannot escape from it, and I think I know.

The hon. Member was away in England last year when this scheme was started. Certain Members of the Council and myself were asked by Government to undertake the drafting of the scheme, and when the hon. Member came back he found this scheme of control practically in being—regulations had been drawn up and published, and a date had been fixed for the coming into force of this control; and quite properly, the hon. Member took a great deal of interest in it. I know he is always interested in the rice industry and it was to be expected that, quite apart from his own personal interest as a rice-dealer (he was never in favour of a single-seller), he should take great interest in the proposed regulations. He came to see me, as I said some time ago, and I must give him credit for the fact that he appeared really to want to co-operate with the Board at the time. Of course he had his conditions, but I do not wish to go into that story any more; it has been ventilated in this Council before. I shall merely say that the position which he expected and hoped to occupy in connection with the scheme did not materialize. Thereupon, the hon. Member took it upon himself to do everything in his power to oppose the activities of the Board. I know that he toured the country and made speeches of a subversive character against the control which Government was then about to introduce, so much so that he caused a great deal of upset in the minds of the growers. That stopped; I am not sure why but perhaps one reason is that rice was declared an essential war service, and it is not a very safe thing for any one to engage in subversive propaganda. Nevertheless, the hon. Member still continued his attacks on the Board and on the working of the

scheme, using his opposition to myself personally and to one or two other members of the Board as the means whereby he could do it.

Of course, it is all nonsense to suggest that I am not qualified to be Chairman of the Board. I am the Treasurer of this Colony. The scheme under which this Board is working is not financed by any capital grant; it is financed purely by Bank overdraft. That is a most important point. Not only that; it was necessary to organise the new business, to put in an accounting organization and so on, and I think that no other officer of the Government (although I say it myself) was in a position to undertake that particular post. Be that as it may, Sir John Waddington at the time urged me to take on those particular duties, and I am very glad I did it, because I have always been interested in rice. On the Essequibo Committee I sat as a member and drew up a complete scheme for a single-seller organization. Therefore, to say that I have not the experience or knowledge of the essentials of a co-operative marketing scheme is absurd. I do not wish to take up the time of the Council too much on this point, but I do say that the hon. Member appears to have got himself into a position of opposition from which he finds it most difficult to extricate himself. Surely he must know that the time must come when he must put an end to that.

The hon. Member said that the Report of the Board is not worth the paper on which it is written. That is nothing new; he said that about the previous one. He went on to lay emphasis on the point that the Board made a loss of \$1,612 for the half-year ended 30th September. He used the word "loss" in a way which does not apply to the transactions of the Board at all. What are the true facts? The Board started on December 1, 1939, but before it began its operations the Board, with the approval of Government, fixed certain purchase prices which it would pay for rice delivered to it. Those prices were considerably higher than anything ruling in the Colony for many years. The Board then got Government to agree to an increase in the local retail selling price of rice by a half-cent per lb. The next step was to try to see what could be obtained in the export markets. I and the Secretary of

the Board went to Trinidad, and we feel that we made a very good bargain because we got Trinidad to agree to give preference to British Guiana to the extent of something like 80 cents per bag over the average price they were then paying for Indian rice. We have maintained those prices throughout, except that during a period of six weeks we paid a bonus of 20 cents per bag on all rice delivered to the Board. The cost of that bonus was \$7,397. Notwithstanding the payment of that bonus the Board ended up with a surplus of \$1,492 in spite of the loss on the Barbados transaction to which I will refer later. Actually the position is that having paid the extra premium of \$7,397 there was a surplus at the end of the 10 months' working of \$1,492. In other words, we paid the prices we intended to pay, paid a little extra and retained both local selling price and export price.

I do not want to stress this, but it must not be overlooked that the exporting interests still collect from the Board 10 cents per bag on every bag of rice which is exported from the Colony, and as the total exports for the 10 months were 147,000 bags that means that \$14,000 was also distributed to exporters. I know, of course, that the growers do not like this charge of 10 cents per bag, but I supported it because I feel that the exporting interests, of whom the hon. Member is one, are entitled to this solatium. I maintain that any honest and unprejudiced person reading those two reports and realizing the enormous difficulties which the Board had to encounter and overcome during the period would come to no other conclusion than that it has been reasonably successful, and what is more, it is an experiment which is fully justified. It has proved that co-operative rice marketing in this Colony is something that has come to stay, and what is more, it is something which the producers want to stay in spite of what the hon. Member says. I for one am very happy to be associated with the first experiment in co-operative rice marketing in this Colony. (Hear, hear).

In regard to exports the figure of 30,000 tons which I am supposed to have told the hon. Member would be the prospective exports from this Colony from October, 1939, to September, 1940, I am sure hon.

Members will agree that the hon. Member has behaved like a fractious school-boy. If those young men from Queen's College who visited the Council yesterday were here again to-day I would have gone into the matter more fully because they would realize that if the hon. Member were a school-boy he would have been taken into the Principal's study and given a caning. All I told the hon. Member was that we hoped to export 30,000 tons, and that figure was based on the conception that we could produce 15,000 tons of rice from the Spring crop. At the time when that optimistic statement was made the Government of the Colony and the Director of Agriculture, who is here now and will hear me out, were engaged in a drive to produce an augmented Spring crop. They were very earnest about it but unfortunately we could not predict the drought, and we did not get 15,000 tons of rice. We got no tons at all. The result has been that all we had to export came from the last Autumn crop. If the hon. Member looks at the figures he will see that the exports from that crop were 13,000 tons, from October, 1939, to September, 1940. Therefore it is quite clear that if we had got the optimistic Spring crop of 15,000 tons we would have gone up to 28,000 tons in exports. I am not placing much emphasis on it but it seems to be so absurd to hear the hon. Member repeating over and over again criticisms of an alleged statement by me that the Colony had 30,000 tons of rice for export.

I now come to exports for 1941. The hon. Member, supported by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), laid down the policy that the Colony should not export any rice until we know that we have enough food in the Colony in the form of rice until November, 1941. Let me say at once that the Board is not prepared to accept that advice, and Government endorses that view. We actually started to export rice by the last Canadian mail which took a shipment of 1,000 bags, and I hope a larger shipment will leave on the next steamer. It is quite clear that this Colony must do something to maintain and retain its export markets. We cannot just hold our hands up and say that there may be another drought and no Spring crop. Our policy is that we are going to export rice on a minimum basis.

and we are going to take every possible step to ensure the growing of an augmented Spring crop. To that end the Sugar Producers' Association has agreed that workers on all sugar estates on the East and West Coasts of Demerara as well as on the Bath and Blairmont estates will be permitted as an emergency measure to plant a Spring crop. That will add considerably to the acreage from which the Spring crop is usually produced, and granted the weather is kind I see no reason at all why the Spring crop should not produce from 8,000 to 10,000 tons. I do not want the hon. Member to put that down and say that I have said it will produce 10,000 tons, for the simple reason that the rice has not been planted yet.

The Secretary of the Board and I had the good fortune—because the hon. Member thinks it is good fortune—to visit Trinidad again. It is very hard work and we were able to conclude another arrangement with the Government of Trinidad. On this occasion we were trying to make an arrangement on the lowest possible basis. Trinidad, of course, want to buy in huge quantities; they want to ensure a complete supply for as long a period as possible, for a year if possible. We were trying to sell them as little as possible and yet to get in. We have got in into his way because Trinidad have agreed to take complete supplies of high-grade super rice from this Colony for the six months—December, 1940, to May, 1941. They put that at 42,000 bags of 160 lbs. each. Actually the figure will be somewhat less. They also asked us to agree that if they want lower grade rice we are to supply it up to 22,000 bags. Naturally we did not want to contract for that, but their position is such that they felt they might urgently want that supply and we also agreed to that. For their part they have agreed to refuse any licences for the importation of high-grade Indian rice which they are to keep out of the market, and get their high-grade rice only from this Colony. They further agreed that later on when we know if we will have further supplies by reason of the Spring crop, they will undertake to take from us a further six months' supply of super rice. They also promised us that, if we wish it, they will give us the Trinidad market for lower grade rice in the months of September, October and November, 1941. I do not

want to go further into the details which led up to these arrangements. We are therefore committed to supply Trinidad with 42,000 bags of super rice and, if they wish it, another 22,000 bags of lower grade rice; in all 4,500 tons.

As regards the Leeward and Windward Islands they are markets which depend on this Colony. They do not like to buy from India if they can help it, and the Board has informed those Colonies that we propose to maintain our exports to those markets—another 3,500 tons. That means that the Board is contemplating an export of 8,000 tons of rice in 1941. That is the only thing for us to do. We cannot possibly hold our heads up and say "No, we are not certain what our position is going to be in 1941" and keep all the rice in the Colony and do not export it.

Mr. JACOB: I never made that suggestion.

Mr. McDAVID: I am very glad to hear that.

Mr. JACOB: I said that we should make sure that we have a sufficient supply of rice for consumption within the Colony up to the 30th of November next year before we export rice.

Mr. McDAVID: That is exactly what I said. Whether I understand what the hon. Member says or not I hope he understands what I say now. We come now to the question of exploitation. It arose because the hon. Member objects so strongly to the comments in the report of the Rice Marketing Board on the attitude of certain producers. Why he should object to those comments I cannot understand. It is common knowledge, and there are so many instances of it that it is hopeless for me to attempt to mention them all. When I came back from Trinidad early in October I heard of the case of a producer who had 400 bags of rice in his mill and refused to hand it over to the Board unless he got an increase of price. He argued on the law of supply and demand,—why shouldn't he get more for his rice? There was a miller who sent in a communication from someone else to the Board in which it was said that the time had arrived when rice which is sold at 3½ cents per pint should be sold at 7 cents

per pint. I do not altogether blame these people for having those ideas because that is the natural commercial practice; but it is not natural in war time. I repeat that in that attitude those people were encouraged by persons who ought to know better.

The hon. Member turned the word "exploitation" on the Board and cited two amusing incidents to prove that the members of the Board are guilty of exploitation. I do not know whom he meant, whether exploitation of the producer or the miller, but I take it he meant the producer. He says that a producer in Berbice sold the representative of the Board in New Amsterdam 12 bags of white rice which was graded as broken rice, and the Board sold that same rice as white B. Now the Board has three prices for purchasing white rice—white A, white B and white broken. On the other hand it has only two prices for selling that rice, white A and white B. The reason for that is quite obvious. White broken is intended for blending with other rice, and is not intended to be sold at all. The clerk in New Amsterdam who purchased this broken rice when he was faced with a request for the sale of the rice to some other person thought he was doing a very clever thing by selling it as white B. It happened that the person buying the rice was either the same person or the wife of the same person who had sold the rice, and the gentleman, instead of going to the Board, went to the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob). Representations were made and the matter was very quickly settled. As we had no selling price for broken rice and had sold that particular rice for white B we promptly paid the difference due for white B to the person from whom we purchased the rice. That happened in February. The clerk who made the error was in New Amsterdam, quite out of immediate control of the organization in Georgetown. Now we are told that is an instance of the Board's exploitation!

Another case is that of a gentleman who delivered to the Board 20 bags of rice with a No. 1 percentage of broken grains but a No. 3 colour. The hon. Mr. Walcott smiles because he knows that such a rice is a stranger. Under our regulations the rice was graded as No. 3. The miller had no right to produce rice of that descrip-

tion; he should have done something to bring it up to a higher standard. It was sold to the Board and the seller expected to get more for it. His demand was rejected and he joined a deputation to the Colonial Secretary at which I was present, and to my astonishment a sample of that wretched rice was put on the table to be examined by the Colonial Secretary. In the end, of course, we got the gentleman to say that by no stretch of the imagination could it have passed as No. 1 rice. What he wanted was, as the hon. Member for North Western District has said, a compromise. How could the Board operate with a system of compromise going on? It just cannot work. We are told that we purchased that rice for \$3.40 per bag as No. 3 and sold it at \$4.50 per bag, making a tremendous profit against the producer.

I am going to amuse the Council by explaining what happened to that unfortunate parcel of rice. I sent for the blending record and found that those 20 bags of No. 3 rice got mixed up with 38 bags of super rice, 14 bags of No. 1, 49 bags of No. 2, 6 bags of super broken, 6 bags of broken, 9 bags of Extra No. 1; and eventually came out after all that mixing as 140 bags of rather inferior No. 1 blend at a cost of \$3.98. The purchase price of No. 1 rice is \$4.20, so that after this manipulation the Board did make an extra profit of 22 cents per bag. If that is exploitation I have to accept it because it is the ordinary practice that goes on, and it is what the hon. Member himself does in his own business, and what any person purchasing and selling rice does all the time. Of course it is not exploitation at all, because the Board does not make profit for itself or for the Government. Any profit made is retained by the Board and is distributed, and I hope in time some profit will be made without increasing the price of rice to the consumer. I hope that disposes of the charge of alleged exploitation on the part of the Board.

With regard to the Barbados-Trinidad purchase let me say at once that the Board is not happy about it. There was a loss of \$8,000 to Government. We were not compelled to buy rice in Barbados and sell to Trinidad. At the time when we suspended exports from the Colony it

was calculated that we had to supply another 18,000 bags of rice to Trinidad under our agreement. Trinidad was short of rice and the Board felt that it was up to us to do something about it, and so we undertook this purchase from Barbados, a gesture which was really very much appreciated by the trade in Trinidad. We did not expect a loss because 10,000 bags of the lot were going direct in two ships which were on their way to Barbados at the time. Unfortunately, Barbados drove a reasonably hard bargain. They insisted that we should pay at the price of replacements, and we did not know what the price of replacements would be. It was at the end of the crop year when supplies of rice were hard to get and as it turned out we made this loss. But don't let us think too hard about it. We have been getting very good profit out of Trinidad and we hope to put them in the position of our good customers. We will soon make up for the loss suffered by the purchase from Barbados, and I do not see why the hon. Member should think it so improper to mention the fact that we made an extra profit on 14,000 bags of rice which we sold to the French Islands. We had a lot of rice on hand much of which was going bad. Trinidad was taking its supplies very slowly and the French Islands on the other hand were pressing for rice. They were at that time allies of Britain and we had been told by the Imperial Government to help them all we could, and we felt it was rather a good thing to do. We supplied 14,000 bags of rice and we got a rather higher rate of profit on that than if we had been conservative and kept it for Trinidad. Therefore I say that the profit on that rice must be set against the loss on the Barbados purchase. I do not think I am doing anything wrong when I say that I personally would have preferred not to sell that rice but to keep it, but the Board's decision was that we should sell it.

The hon. Member touched on a matter about which he had asked some questions. He is not satisfied with the answers. He wanted to know the number of bags and the profit on all rice purchased or taken over by the Board from exporting agents at the commencement of its operations. The answer of Government was that they were individual financial transactions between people who were competitors,

and it was not in the public interest to disclose that information. I do not mind telling the hon. Member what happened, because I know what the suggestion is; it is that certain individuals took advantage of the opportunity before the regulations were put into force to buy large quantities of rice and re-sell it to the Board, and thereby made a big profit. The answer to that is that it was an open secret that this control was coming in. During the month of October everybody knew about it. Several export agents did buy rice and the Board was very glad that they did so because, during October, 1939, there was no export at all, and but for this buying of rice the unfortunate grower would have been in a bad way. They bought rice at a time when there was no movement of rice. The total amount of rice taken over by the Board from those export agents was 48,000 bags distributed among 18 agents. The largest amount was 23,000 bags bought from one individual who had plunged very heavily. I will gratify the hon. Member's curiosity by telling him that his firm was the sixth highest on the list. The hon. Member was engaged in certain private affairs in England and if he were here I believe he would have plunged very heavily. Therefore he must not be jealous of anybody else who made a little money in that way. I understand he did very well in England.

There is one other point I must refer to with reference to the hon. Member's questions. In the answer to one question Government referred the hon. Member to a letter supposed to have been addressed to him from the Chairman of the Rice Producers' Advisory Committee. I regret very much to say he is quite correct. The hon. Member apparently did not get that letter. What happened was this: The letter was sent by the Secretary of the Board on the 12th of September to the Chairman of the Committee and it happened that on that particular day a meeting of that Committee took place, so it did not get on the agenda of that meeting, but it was put on the agenda of the meeting of the 10th of October. It happened that the hon. Member did not attend that meeting and the letter was therefore deferred. He resigned from the Committee immediately afterwards. I asked the Chairman, Mr. Macnie, why wasn't a copy of the letter sent to the hon. Member, and I was told that

the decision was taken by the Committee that in order to save stationery they were not to send out copies of letters. I am very sorry about it because the questions asked were quite easily answered, and the only reason why they were omitted from the printed answers was because they were answered in quite great detail in the letter to the hon. Member, and it was not considered necessary to repeat them on the printed answers to his questions. I will see that a copy of the details be sent to the hon. Member at the earliest possible opportunity.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) made certain points to which I would like to refer briefly although he is not here now. He made bitter complaint about the Board not detaining rice which had been appealed against by producers who were dissatisfied with the grading. Rice is usually kept by the Board for 7 to 14 days. Samples are taken and grades are fixed. If the seller of the rice is dissatisfied he has a right of appeal to the Board, but if the rice is required for use at once samples are kept and examined by the Appeals Committee who either allow the claim or reject it. There is absolutely no reason whatever why the Board should undertake to set aside large consignments of rice solely because the seller is not satisfied with the price. Obviously the organization of the Board would be completely upset if a large number of producers insisted on several lots of rice being stored around the warehouse merely because they do not like the price. The same result is achieved by having samples kept for the Appeals Committee.

The hon. Member also referred to irrigation and drainage, and seemed to have the idea that any profit made by the Board would be used for measures of irrigation and drainage. He is extremely optimistic about that, because I could never contemplate such huge profits as would be required to undertake an irrigation scheme. It is not the function of the Rice Marketing Board at all.

Lastly, I want to say a few words about the Board and its meetings. People are too apt to judge the work of the Board by the members of the Board by mere records of its meetings. The Board holds regular meetings once a week, sometimes more

frequently. Then there is a Business Committee of the Board composed of business members and myself who either meet more often or more often than not telephone each other. Decisions have to be made so quickly that often there is no time for a meeting. There is also an Appeals Committee which decides grading appeals, and meets very frequently indeed. Therefore a mere examination of the attendance register does not at all indicate the work of the Board which goes on incessantly. Some members are keener than others, and I may mention one who is the keenest of all, and that is Mr. John Fernandes who devotes a considerable amount of his time to the Board's business. I do hope hon. Members will not just look at the record of the Board's meetings and judge the work done by the Board.

I must also pay public tribute to Mr. Gadd, the Secretary of the Board, and the senior officers. Only those Members who were concerned with the work of the Board from the first day of its existence will appreciate the immense amount of work which had to be put in in order to organize and bring into being this new and bold business handling a turn-over of rice of over a million dollars. It was a tremendous job and Mr. Gadd and some other officers put their souls into the work. They worked hard night after night until late hours—10 and 11 o'clock—and that has gone on almost continuously. I do hope hon. Members will realize that something is due to those people and not criticism only. I wish it to go on record that I, as Chairman of the Board, am very pleased with the work put in by the Secretary and his staff.

I am sorry to have to end on an unfortunate note. I understand from one hon. Member that a case is to be brought for insulting language against one of the officers of the Board. I am sorry to hear that, and I happen to know something of the incident which took place; I happened to be in the office of the Secretary at the time. I do believe that the matter ought to be talked over reasonably between the two parties concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you say that legal proceedings are likely to be taken?

Mr. McDAVID: Yes, sir. As you

have hinted, sir, I shall not make further mention of the matter because, apparently, legal proceedings are being taken.

I hope I have covered all the points raised during the debate, and I do hope that rice will not continue to be our meal for the rest of the day.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): In concluding this debate I would like to make one or two remarks—

MR. JACOB: Concluding?

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. Director is an optimist. (Laughter).

Professor DASH: At any rate I would like to make a few remarks with reference to one or two points which have arisen during the debate. I do not intend to go over the ground covered by the Treasurer, but I wish to touch first of all on the point which was raised by the hon. Mr. Walcott as regards the difficulty of forecasting and estimating a crop like rice which is, of course, a short cycle crop, and about which there is always some uncertainty until the product is put into the bag. Of course, as hon. Members know, we have perhaps one man in each district who is expected to follow up this work. In a country like Canada, in the case of wheat, for example, the check up is done by three different authorities. The Federal Authorities check up and forecast, and there are the Provincial authorities and the railway authorities. Here that sort of thing is done by a very limited personnel, therefore it must be expected that we cannot be as close in our estimates of crops as they are in countries like Canada, especially in the case of a crop like rice. On the whole, however, I would like to say that comparing our figures for forecasts with the actual figures over a period of years I think our estimates have been more or less within 10 per cent. of the actual figures. The 1939 crop presented extraordinary difficulty in that the weather conditions behaved as we all know they did. When the crop was in its final stage there was a shortage of water, especially in the Berbice area, and that rather threw our forecast out. As a matter of fact if hon. Members look at the statement they will notice that it was only in Berbice where the figures were materially out. Another factor that influenced it was

that the crop for 1939 showed up a considerable percentage of wind rice, the effect of which can only be judged when the padi is milled. I mention those points to show the difficulties that arise in getting out figures based on crop production, and I think hon. Members will appreciate what I have said.

I would like to bear out what the Colonial Treasurer has stated in connection with the position last year when, as we all know, every effort was made to get increased production in the Spring crop in order to supply additional quantities of rice to our West Indian markets, and the figure mentioned at the time was obviously a figure based on what we hoped to get if normal conditions prevailed. Instead very abnormal conditions prevailed.

The position for 1941 is in hand, and Government has asked the sugar estates and has received assurance of every co-operation in respect of the increased area to be planted. The Department is also taking every possible step to push that forward. We must appreciate this gesture on the part of the sugar estates because it is at some sacrifice to them. Certain posters have been distributed about the country as it was felt that they were absolutely essential if the growers were to get a true perspective of the position.

I think it was the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) who raised the question of grading in Essequibo. I am not quite sure what has developed in recent months but I shall enquire into it.

Mr. McDAVID: I gave the hon. Member the answer privately and he was quite satisfied.

Mr. JACOB: I do not propose to reply in detail. The Treasurer has—

Mr. WALCOTT: I ask that the question be now put, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has a right to reply to criticisms.

Mr. JACOB: I am not surprised at the attitude of the hon. Nominated Member on my right. Accusations have been levelled against me. The Treasurer said I took an hour to speak on the matter. I

looked at the clock and I observed that he took 45 minutes. There is not much difference. He charged me with self-deception. I retort by saying that he has deceived the public—not only the public in British Guiana but the public in Trinidad and the entire West Indies. The Marketing Board has done that. The figures quoted last year and in the last report of the Rice Marketing Board show that there was an anticipated surplus of 30,000 tons of rice. I am saying it should have been 45,000 tons because 15,000 tons for the Spring crop which was not reaped was not mentioned at the private interview. Therefore, if we exclude that and the export figure would not be more than 10,000 tons for 1940, there is a shortage of 5,000 tons on those figures. The drought was on when I spoke in November, 1939, and has been partially on up to a few days ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. Member, but would he elaborate that? Does he say that the drought was on in November, 1939?

Mr. JACOB: The drought was on in November, 1939.

THE CHAIRMAN: How long did it continue?

Mr. JACOB: As a matter of fact there was only a partial suspension of the drought up to a week ago when we had heavy rainfall.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must congratulate the hon. Member on his foresight. (Laughter).

Mr. JACOB: There is misconception in the Council. I said in November, 1939, that we must check the actual supplies available and not anticipate the crop, and I was assured that there were stocks available for export. That has been written over and over again and sent to Government. The plain fact remains that only 10,000 tons are available for export in 1940. I was extremely pleased to hear that arrangements are being made to export only 8,000 tons in 1941. I think I wrote the Colonial Secretary a letter about a month ago stating that in my opinion the exports for 1941 would not be more than 8,000 tons unless steps were taken to

secure a good Spring crop. That is the right way to go about it, but when the Treasurer and the Rice Grading Inspector went to Trinidad the Treasurer told them that we could sell them 20,000 tons of rice.

Mr. McDAVID: We did nothing of the kind. They were told 10,000 tons.

Mr. JACOB: I was there in November last year and I was told that arrangements had been concluded for 10,000 tons, and that arrangements were proceeding for another 10,000 tons.

Mr. McDAVID: I do not know where the hon. Member gets his information from. My negotiations were conducted with the Government. I am quite sure he could not get it from the Government.

Mr. JACOB: I got it from the Comptroller of Customs in Trinidad. He told me that arrangements had already been concluded, and when I enquired of the Treasurer here he told me that it had been definitely concluded. That is my position.

THE CHAIRMAN: And that turned out to be correct.

Mr. JACOB: I was informed in Trinidad that it had been concluded. The fact remains that 10,000 tons were sold and arrangements were being made to give Trinidad all of her requirements in the future. Whether that was so or not I do not know. I became alarmed because the exports for 1939 would not be 15,000 tons, and how was it possible in 1941 to export 30,000 tons? The Board having been strengthened, and having gained experience, now believes that it is the right thing not to sell more than 4,500 tons to Trinidad up to the end of 1941. That seems a reasonable thing to do, and to sell 3,500 tons to the other Islands, making the exports for 1941 8,000 tons. I have always complained that the exports of rice before control came in were 29,500 tons, and that control has brought us to the present position. It is true that there have been droughts, but it is not drought alone that is responsible for our present position. I was amused but not at all surprised to hear the statement that I toured the whole country and did everything possible to prevent people from planting rice, and that I opposed the Marketing Board.

Mr. McDAVID I did not say that.

Mr. JACOB: I did not tour the country at all in 1940. My last visit to the country may have been in January—it was certainly not later than January, 1940. I think my last visit to the Corentyne Coast was in December, 1939, and since then I have not been to the Corentyne, nor have I toured the country in any way. When I was connected with the East Indian Association and another association I did tour the country, but at the beginning of this year I have not been touring the country, and I have not opposed the Marketing Board or advised people not to plant rice. The records are there for inspection. I am glad to hear it is not suggested that I prevented people from planting rice.

It would appear from what the Treasurer has said that he actually directed his appointment as Chairman of the Board. I will say nothing more about it. It is a most unfortunate choice, and if Government and the Chairman himself believe that he is the best choice we need not be surprised at the results. I am however surprised at the results, but I think Government is perfectly satisfied that the results so far are satisfactory. Of course, my hon. friend objects to my statement that the Board had suffered a loss of \$1,600. He prefers to say that the expenditure exceeded income. That may be all right for accountants and highly educated people, but I prefer to speak so that the ordinary man should understand. If it is the policy of Government—and it appears to me it is—that the reports of the Board should be couched in language which the ordinary man cannot understand, it must not be surprised if the results are disappointing. I say that the Board suffered a loss; my friend thinks that the word "loss" should not be used. I prefer to use simple words which will be understood and appreciated by the ordinary man.

With regard to the 20 bags of rice referred to by Mr. Boodhoo I know from my experience in the industry that it has happened over and over again that when rice was blended for export and the colour was slightly dark it was passed on the percentage of breakage only. I challenge anyone, even the Director of Agriculture,

to deny that that rice should have been graded as No 1 rice, because the breakage was No. 1. The colour had nothing to do with it. With a scarcity of rice prevailing I think a point might have been stretched so that the individual might not lose any money on the transaction. Most of the statements made by growers are never believed. The Treasurer remarked that the "wretched rice" was placed before him. Of course it was wretched rice; it should never have been produced and should never have gone into consumption; it should have been thrown away.

It was stated that it was an open secret that control was coming in. Of course it was an open secret, but the details of the control were only known to one or two persons, and one particular individual with the help of his friends took advantage of the control, with the result that 23,000 bags of rice were supplied by one particular firm. Perhaps I had better not say anything about it. It was stated that my firm was the sixth largest contributor. Perhaps the Treasurer might disclose the quantity, because one firm supplied 23,000 bags out of 48,000 bags. There is other information I propose to get and I shall write Government when I have got the figures and leave it to Government to investigate the matter. It was an open secret and the result is that huge profits were made at the expense of the other competitors. They were all surprised when they saw a certain firm buying large quantities of rice.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has just complained that there were no competitors.

Mr. JACOB: There were competitors in November last, and my point is that all the competitors should have been aware of the information. Only one gentleman knew of the information and used it to the advantage of himself and his friends. I will not worry with the other statements made by the Treasurer but I do want to say that I wish to cast no reflection on any employee of the Government or the Board who is working well and giving satisfaction, but there have been numerous complaints in the first instance that there are employees of the Board who are pensioners and men with absolutely no experience of rice. It is true that changes have been

made, but it was directly due to criticisms that those changes have been made, and criticisms of a constructive nature. The Rice Marketing Board, I was told, is not a Board to look after the planting and milling of rice but just the selling of rice. It is a Marketing Board and I would like to enquire about the first Board which was in operation up to March, 1931; how many members of that Board had marketing experience? In the past the Board had the benefit of the assistance of an Advisory Committee. I do not think the Treasurer would be so bold as to suggest that he knows the technique of marketing. He suggests that he is the right person to be Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, and that he knows the technique of marketing. It may be that Government has so much confidence in the Treasurer that anything he says Government believes, but the public does not.

The hon. Mr. Walcott made some very distressing remarks this morning. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) has asked me to thank him for the statement he made that we were in a position to get more rice planted, but having accused us of trying to prevent people from planting it was a matter for him to turn over the question in his own mind and decide whether, having been accused, we should sit quietly or whether we should go out and tell the people that they must plant rice under these conditions. The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) suggested that we should go to our constituencies and advise the people to plant more rice. So far as I am concerned my constituents are not rice planters at all. I keep in close touch with them, and I would like to advise the hon. Member, if he would take my advice, foolish as it may be, that he should keep more closely in touch with his constituents in Eastern Berbice. I have transmitted several letters to Government from his constituents requesting that I should go and speak to them. It is purely on matters of public interest when I go to another constituency. I over-work myself and I am sorry to say it is not appreciated.

Mr C. V. WIGHT: As a creole of the Colony and a Member of the Council I cannot sit here and allow to go unchallenged the remark made by the hon. Member that the Chairman or the Rice

Marketing Board has attempted to or has deceived the public or the Governments of Trinidad and Barbados.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have had enough of rice, but before I put the question there are one or two points I feel bound to refer to myself. We have had a great deal of criticism of the rice position and of the Rice Marketing Board, much of it extremely dubious, vague and even nugatory. The whole of the criticism crystallizes into one request, made particularly to me, I suppose, that there should be considerable changes in the personnel of the Board on the ground that it has not the confidence of the public, and that if the right kind of changes were made (it is not exactly specified what the changes should be but I think my intelligence is sufficient to enable me to form an estimate of the nature of the changes desired) the confidence of the public in the Board would be restored and everything would go smoothly—rain would fall, rice would grow, grading would be perfect and so forth.

The statement that the members of the Board have not the confidence of the public is not one which is susceptible of proof or disproof. One hon. Member almost confessed that he scarcely hoped to convince Government, but he wishes to convince the public. That statement, from its very nature, is not susceptible of proof or disproof, but I only want to let the public know that there is another side to the picture. I have naturally other sources of information and advice as well as Members of this Council, and I should like it to be known that I have received very strong representations in precisely the opposite direction to those put forward this morning by some hon. Members. I am trying to avoid personalities, but I think the meaning is clear enough. I have received very strong representations from various sources, including some growers, that the Board should not be interfered with; that it has the confidence of the public and, above all, that the independence of the Board should be preserved. They have gone further than that and particularly asked in some cases that the Board should be protected from the influence of some of its critics. I think it is well that it should be known that there are strong representations on

the other side. It is not well that statements like those which have been made here should be made without an answer to the effect that there is another and a completely different point of view very strongly held by a great many people, to say the least of it.

Item 3—Library and Publications, \$1,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$270. An Agricultural Handbook will shortly be issued containing the gist of the replies to the Royal Commission's questionnaire. The Handbook costs 7/6 per copy and there will be a separate pamphlet relating to British Guiana only which will probably be sold at sixpence each. Copies have been ordered and \$270 is required to meet the cost. I move that the amount be carried out at \$1,270.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 24—Maintenance of Cattle Trail, \$7,500.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would like some information about this item. I notice from the explanatory note that it was originally under head XXXV.—Public Works Annually—Recurrent—and it has occurred to me to enquire whether it has been transferred to the Department of Agriculture in view of the decision to carry on experimental work on the Berbice river. I would like to know whether the two things are connected in any way.

Professor DASH: This suggestion was made some time ago because it was felt that the maintenance of the cattle trail is more than merely a question of engineering; it has to do with the possibility of securing areas alongside the trail for growing forage and matters of that sort, and of course it does have relation to the proposal to start experimental work with cattle up the Berbice river, although perhaps not as closely as the hon. Member thinks. Certainly if that work is carried out the maintenance of the trail and the experimental work with cattle would be very closely connected, but it does not follow that because there is a proposal to do experimental work on the Berbice river that this cattle trail is connected with

that work. The supervision of the cattle trail will be taken over by the Department of Agriculture in any case. It is not strictly a Public Works matter but a proposal to keep an eye on the condition of the cattle.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Is it to be supported by an increase of the toll or anything of that sort?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no question of an increase of the toll.

THE CHAIRMAN: The whole idea is that the trail should be better maintained by the Department of Agriculture.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 25—Granting of Loans to Co-operative Credit Banks, \$5,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am trying to keep track of the cattle trail. I understand that there is a movement on foot to assist the Credit Banks, but amounts like this are recoverable, and I think items of this sort should be put under a different classification altogether.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to item 24 the policy under which tolls used to be collected on the cattle trail is not to be continued at present. The collection of tolls was suspended some time ago. It means that the control of the vote will be under the Department of Agriculture now.

Mr. JACOB: Is \$5,000 all that is intended for loans to Credit Banks for the purpose of increasing agricultural production?

Mr. McDAVID: That is only in the nature of a token vote. Loans to those Banks were suspended for some time and never appeared on the estimate at all. Under the new policy all these loans are now put before the Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: Isn't that the accounting policy which we are instructed to observe?

Mr. McDAVID: Yes, sir. The point is that previously these loans were made before they were actually voted by the Council. It is in the interest of the Coun-

oil that they are put on the estimate so as to reserve the right of the Council of veto or otherwise. There is a Statute which permits Government to grant these loans. These loans are payable in 25 years, so that the rate of repayment is very slow.

Mr. JACOB: I support the hon. Member in asking that a special head be introduced. I would like to ask what amount has been loaned to rice producers? At the private interview it was suggested that a sum around \$150,000 should be loaned.

Mr. McDAVD: I do not know what is the total amount but I think that authority was issued for \$25,000, and as far as I am aware that sum has not been reached or exceeded. It would not appear on these estimates because, in that particular case, it is expected that repayment will take place within one year. That is the accounting policy. As regards the allocation of the vote it is also part of the accounting instructions that where a Department administers a vote the proper place for the item is in that Department's estimate. I sympathize with the views of the hon. Member; I find difficulty myself. For instance, under Treasury there is a large sum of \$20,000 for refunds of income tax.

Mr. JACOB: May I suggest that the item might be put lower on the page? For future reference particularly I think it would be a step in the right direction, but the amount is so small. I wish it was \$50,000.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am quite aware that the Treasurer is acting on instructions from the Colonial Office, but it is not what one might call good accounting. After all we are considering estimates of colonial expenditure. We are faced now with an item which is not in itself an expenditure but is in the nature of a loan which will be refunded at some future date, yet it finds itself on our estimates of expenditure. There are several other items like this. When we have totalled up the various heads and we arrive at a sum of six million dollars as the expenditure of the Colony that would not be correct, and one would be quite justified in saying that we are spending more money than we should on these services. I submit

that it is not good accounting, apart from the fact that as a Member of the Council I am apt to lose sight of these items.

THE CHAIRMAN: It does create difficulties but we are bound by the general accounting rules of the Colonial Services and this has become part of those rules now.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am wondering whether the point I have made should not be represented to the Colonial Office, with respect of course, pointing out that Members of the Council are finding it extremely difficult to follow these estimates of expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member can rest assured that it has probably been represented. I am quite sure that a great many Colonies have had something to say about it, but the Colonial Office have stuck to their guns and the Auditors are bound to deal with the accounts on that basis.

Mr. JACOB: Couldn't it be put lower on the page and not added?

THE CHAIRMAN: It must be added.

Mr. JACOB: It could be added in the summary at the bottom under an appropriate name, for instance, Loans Recoverable.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a sound guiding principle in Government, amounting almost to a superstition, that loans are recoverable. (Laughter).

Mr. JACOB: The particular item might stand by itself and not added.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot see any object in doing that. I informed hon. Members some time ago that items under Colonial Development Fund Schemes will not appear under that head but will be provided under the departmental heads concerned. I therefore beg to move in under this head a new item 28—Tobacco Industry Development, \$4,796—under Extraordinary Expenditure.

Item put, and agreed to.

Mr. McDAVID I did not say that.

Mr. JACOB: I did not tour the country at all in 1940. My last visit to the country may have been in January.—it was certainly not later than January, 1940. I think my last visit to the Corentyne Coast was in December, 1939, and since then I have not been to the Corentyne, nor have I toured the country in any way. When I was connected with the East Indian Association and another association I did tour the country, but at the beginning of this year I have not been touring the country, and I have not opposed the Marketing Board or advised people not to plant rice. The records are there for inspection. I am glad to hear it is not suggested that I prevented people from planting rice.

It would appear from what the Treasurer has said that he actually directed his appointment as Chairman of the Board. I will say nothing more about it. It is a most unfortunate choice, and if Government and the Chairman himself believe that he is the best choice we need not be surprised at the results. I am however surprised at the results, but I think Government is perfectly satisfied that the results so far are satisfactory. Of course, my hon. friend objects to my statement that the Board had suffered a loss of \$1,600. He prefers to say that the expenditure exceeded income. That may be all right for accountants and highly educated people, but I prefer to speak so that the ordinary man should understand. If it is the policy of Government—and it appears to me it is—that the reports of the Board should be couched in language which the ordinary man cannot understand, it must not be surprised if the results are disappointing. I say that the Board suffered a loss; my friend thinks that the word "loss" should not be used. I prefer to use simple words which will be understood and appreciated by the ordinary man.

With regard to the 20 bags of rice referred to by Mr. Boodhoo I know from my experience in the industry that it has happened over and over again that when rice was blended for export and the colour was slightly dark it was passed on the percentage of breakage only. I challenge anyone, even the Director of Agriculture,

to deny that that rice should have been graded as No 1 rice, because the breakage was No. 1. The colour had nothing to do with it. With a scarcity of rice prevailing I think a point might have been stretched so that the individual might not lose any money on the transaction. Most of the statements made by growers are never believed. The Treasurer remarked that the "wretched rice" was placed before him. Of course it was wretched rice; it should never have been produced and should never have gone into consumption; it should have been thrown away.

It was stated that it was an open secret that control was coming in. Of course it was an open secret, but the details of the control were only known to one or two persons, and one particular individual with the help of his friends took advantage of the control, with the result that 23,000 bags of rice were supplied by one particular firm. Perhaps I had better not say anything about it. It was stated that my firm was the sixth largest contributor. Perhaps the Treasurer might disclose the quantity, because one firm supplied 23,000 bags out of 48,000 bags. There is other information I propose to get and I shall write Government when I have got the figures and leave it to Government to investigate the matter. It was an open secret and the result is that huge profits were made at the expense of the other competitors. They were all surprised when they saw a certain firm buying large quantities of rice.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has just complained that there were no competitors.

Mr. JACOB: There were competitors in November last, and my point is that all the competitors should have been aware of the information. Only one gentleman knew of the information and used it to the advantage of himself and his friends. I will not worry with the other statements made by the Treasurer but I do want to say that I wish to cast no reflection on any employee of the Government or the Board who is working well and giving satisfaction, but there have been numerous complaints in the first instance that there are employees of the Board who are pensioners and men with absolutely no experience of rice. It is true that changes have been

made, but it was directly due to criticisms that those changes have been made, and criticisms of a constructive nature. The Rice Marketing Board, I was told, is not a Board to look after the planting and milling of rice but just the selling of rice. It is a Marketing Board and I would like to enquire about the first Board which was in operation up to March, 1931; how many members of that Board had marketing experience? In the past the Board had the benefit of the assistance of an Advisory Committee. I do not think the Treasurer would be so bold as to suggest that he knows the technique of marketing. He suggests that he is the right person to be Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, and that he knows the technique of marketing. It may be that Government has so much confidence in the Treasurer that anything he says Government believes, but the public does not.

The hon. Mr. Walcott made some very distressing remarks this morning. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) has asked me to thank him for the statement he made that we were in a position to get more rice planted, but having accused us of trying to prevent people from planting it was a matter for him to turn over the question in his own mind and decide whether, having been accused, we should sit quietly or whether we should go out and tell the people that they must plant rice under these conditions. The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo) suggested that we should go to our constituencies and advise the people to plant more rice. So far as I am concerned my constituents are not rice planters at all. I keep in close touch with them, and I would like to advise the hon. Member, if he would take my advice, foolish as it may be, that he should keep more closely in touch with his constituents in Eastern Berbice. I have transmitted several letters to Government from his constituents requesting that I should go and speak to them. It is purely on matters of public interest when I go to another constituency. I over-work myself and I am sorry to say it is not appreciated.

Mr C. V. WIGHT: As a creole of the Colony and a Member of the Council I cannot sit here and allow to go unchallenged the remark made by the hon. Member that the Chairman or the Rice

Marketing Board has attempted to or has deceived the public or the Governments of Trinidad and Barbados.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have had enough of rice, but before I put the question there are one or two points I feel bound to refer to myself. We have had a great deal of criticism of the rice position and of the Rice Marketing Board, much of it extremely dubious, vague and even nugatory. The whole of the criticism crystallizes into one request, made particularly to me, I suppose, that there should be considerable changes in the personnel of the Board on the ground that it has not the confidence of the public, and that if the right kind of changes were made (it is not exactly specified what the changes should be but I think my intelligence is sufficient to enable me to form an estimate of the nature of the changes desired) the confidence of the public in the Board would be restored and everything would go smoothly—rain would fall, rice would grow, grading would be perfect and so forth.

The statement that the members of the Board have not the confidence of the public is not one which is susceptible of proof or disproof. One hon. Member almost confessed that he scarcely hoped to convince Government, but he wishes to convince the public. That statement, from its very nature, is not susceptible of proof or disproof, but I only want to let the public know that there is another side to the picture. I have naturally other sources of information and advice as well as Members of this Council, and I should like it to be known that I have received very strong representations in precisely the opposite direction to those put forward this morning by some hon. Members. I am trying to avoid personalities, but I think the meaning is clear enough. I have received very strong representations from various sources, including some growers, that the Board should not be interfered with; that it has the confidence of the public and, above all, that the independence of the Board should be preserved. They have gone further than that and particularly asked in some cases that the Board should be protected from the influence of some of its critics. I think it is well that it should be known that there are strong representations on

EDUCATION—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I am afraid I will have to strike a discordant note under this head, and when we reach the particular items I shall move that they be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. Member mind passing the pages until we come to the particular items he wishes to deal with?

EDUCATION—SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 9—Refresher Courses to teachers, \$600.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: The items I propose to deal with are item 9—Refresher Courses to Teachers, \$600; item 10 (2)—New Schools to be established in 1941, \$3,720; (3)—Additional Teachers, \$8,400 and (4)—2 Janitors, Colonial Schools, \$504. I cannot attack item (5)—Temporary War Bonus, \$25,280—because we are bound in principle to carry that out. In making my remarks I desire it to be clearly understood that I am not attacking the policy of free primary education, and I am making no attack whatever on the existing system of education, neither am I for one minute attributing anything, but the best intentions to those who are directing primary education, or anything but the best motives and sincerity in their work on the part of the teachers who conduct the primary schools.

There can be no doubt that the world as a whole is in favour of free primary education, and I think anybody who opposes that principle would be hooted at. I have never opposed it in principle. I think every country should have free primary education to an extent commensurate with its revenue. Whether or not this Colony has gone far beyond what is commensurate with its revenue in providing free primary education is a question which I will leave for another occasion. I feel very strongly that at a time like this we should do everything we possibly can to curb expenditure. The items I have referred to are items of new expenditure. Our expenditure on primary education at present represents, I think, about 8 per cent. of the Colony's revenue. We have given an undertaking to the Imperial Government that we will require no more help from them while the

Empire is at war, and that we will endeavour to keep our services going. I take it that we referred to services which were existing. After all it must be borne in mind that primary education is not an economic service which will give us immediate return. I think it will be agreed that the benefits of primary education may not be seen for several hundred years, but it is agreed that we must go on with it to the best of our ability and according to our resources.

A great war is on us and it is the duty of every citizen of the Empire to do all he possibly can to win that war. Win it we certainly shall, but we know it is going to cost a lot of money. We are told day in and day out by the BBC that all the money possible is required. We are told to conserve all our money and lend it with or without interest to the Empire. Every Colony of the Empire has endeavoured through its Legislature to vote money to the Empire's war effort. We are quite unable to do that here because we have not got the finance to do it. The best we have been able to do is to tell the Mother Country that we will forego any aid as a token of good faith. But that is not enough. Can we not try to do without this expenditure for a year or two? Is it so necessary for the welfare of the Colony and the Empire that new schools should be built now? Is it absolutely necessary that \$8,000 should be spent on the employment of new teachers? Can that sum not provide the nucleus of a fund to help the Mother Country? Must we spend this money on a service that is not essential at the moment? Why should we increase our education vote at this stage? I am appealing to every Member of this Council to consult his conscience and ask himself whether he thinks that at a time like this, when the Empire needs all the money it can get we should spend more money on primary education—not only primary education but anything we can possibly do without which is not going towards the war effort? One can understand more expenditure on agriculture because we are endeavouring to keep our food supplies going. In what respect can this \$13,000 to be spent on education help us in this time of stress? It is true that it is only \$13,000, but next year there will be more teachers and more increments to be paid.

I am making this appeal to Government in all earnestness. If Government would not listen, and if the Council approves of these items my conscience will be clear, but I do suggest that every Member should seriously consider whether those new items should be voted at all. Even if this money is not sent to the Mother Country can we not use it for the benefit of our poor people who are in need? In some districts people are in real distress by not having work to do. Let us give to our brothers who are suffering more in Britain. For £5,000 we can provide a *Spitfire* with which they can shoot down a few bombers. This proposed expenditure of \$13,000 is an unnecessary increase of a service that is very well provided for at present. The total estimated revenue of the Colony for 1941 is \$6,674,275 and the estimated expenditure on primary education is \$525,125, about 8 per cent. of the total revenue of the Colony.

I know that the accommodation in the schools is inadequate, and that there are insufficient teachers, but all of that could be remedied if and when we have the money to remedy it. The matter should be carefully considered before these estimates are passed. It is a travesty to keep on saying how grateful we ought to be to the Mother Country for the fight she is putting up, and in the next breath to spend \$13,000 more on primary education which is only being thrown away. Even if we lost five years by holding up the scheme to provide new schools, is that sacrifice as much as that which is being made by the people of Britain? I respectfully submit that these items should be withdrawn. If they are not withdrawn I will move their deletion. I am asking Government and the Elected Members to consider these items seriously and not simply take up the position that because they concern primary education we must pass anything. There are some Members who as long as primary education is mentioned think they should allow the whole of the Colony's revenue to be spent in that direction.

Mr. JACOB: I have to congratulate the hon. Member on his persistence in regard to primary education, his persistence in trying to reduce the vote year after year. I was not surprised that the hon. Member said nothing when the Audit vote was being considered, although it

shows an increase of \$2,417. Again, when the Colonial Secretary's Office vote was under consideration the hon. Member said nothing about the increase of \$3,232. In the Audit Department there were three additional posts about which nothing was said, but in the case of primary education my friend says that no new schools should be built, no additional teachers should be employed. He made an appeal to send money to help the war effort. We are all doing what we can in that direction. If the hon. Member would take his mind back he would realize how primary education was neglected in this Colony, and that it would be almost a crime not to have additional schools. The East Indian Association went into the question very carefully and found that 40 per cent. of the children of school going age were not attending school in the whole Colony. There is a law that every child of school age must go to school. Being one of His Majesty's Counsel I thought my hon. friend would have pleaded with Government to enforce the law relating to primary education. I do not know why the law is not enforced. It is time that we begin in a small way.

I think it was in December last that I went to a certain district on the Corentyne Coast (I wrote Government and the Education Department about it) and I discovered a father of 40, a mother of 35 and children between 18 and 14 years all illiterate. They had never been to school, and the smaller children of school-going age were attending a so-called school with no certificated teacher and accommodation for about 60 children. In the district there was a school-going population of about 800. Those of us who live and die here and look upon British Guiana as our home are alarmed at that state of affairs, and we plead that rather than curtail expenditure on education Government should spend more money on education. We plead that there should be schools wherever there is a school going population; that there should be more and better teachers, more Educational Officers and more Inspectors too. At the moment I think better results could be obtained by the appointment of a few more Inspectors of Schools to see that all the schools are filled, that the teachers do their work properly and that every pupil gets the right instruction. I am very sorry I cannot agree with the hon. Member. This is not

the first time he has taken this stand. As a matter of fact when we had the informal meeting my friend made the astounding statement that if we educate people they become worse.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: What?

Mr. JACOB: You said that education would make them worse.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I must interrupt the hon. Member; he is irresponsible. (Laughter).

Mr. JACOB: I will refresh the hon. Member's memory. I think he will give me credit for not making a statement that is untrue. Last Saturday when he attended the informal meeting I asked him if he would make a comparison with the people of England, or Europe for instance, where 99 per cent. of the people were literate, while in this Colony we have not got 50 per cent.; and he did not reply. It is my unfortunate way of putting facts. Under 60 per cent. of the children of school age in this Colony are going to school, and I do not think the percentage of literacy among adults is more than 50. If that is a satisfactory state of affairs for this Colony I beg to disagree. I again plead for more expenditure on primary education.

Dr. SINGH: There is a large percentage of illiteracy in this Colony. I am sure that if there were more literate people there would not be so much trouble and so many strikes in the Colony. Apart from that we are looking forward to the future citizens of the Colony to bring about greater progress, therefore I think primary education should be encouraged. I heartily support the items under this head and my only regret is that we are not in a position to spend more money on education.

Mr. JACKSON: I must compliment the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) on the apologetic manner in which he voiced his opposition to the items he has enumerated. From the manner in which he spoke and endeavoured to impress the Council that he had nothing against education one got the impression that he was in dire conflict with his conscience. As a matter of fact the small amount he would deny primary education, and the skilful manner in which he re-

garded the items as non-essentials, revealed a frame of mind which is unworthy of him. I do not think, if he had given the matter the consideration it deserves, he would have attacked those items in the manner in which he did. Primary education is a necessity, a great necessity, and all efforts that are made to promote it should be encouraged by those who have the interest of the Colony and the general community at heart. To deny a few teachers an opportunity to improve their teaching qualities, to deny them the opportunity of imbibing new methods of teaching is to deny them the tools which they must necessarily use in the practice of their profession. Everyone must naturally expect that those who are selected to train the young should be well equipped for the duties they have to discharge, and as we have a training institution which turns out year after year just a score of teachers it has become absolutely necessary that those teachers who have not been fortunate enough to get into that training institution, and those who perhaps qualified for their profession before the training institution was established, should have the best means placed at their disposal in order that they might be properly equipped to carry on their work. Therefore to say that a refresher course for those teachers at a cost of \$600 is a non-essential is absurd. It is certainly necessary that that amount should be voted, and like the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) I regret that it is not larger.

To speak of the new schools which it is proposed to establish in 1941 as being non-essential is to be unacquainted with the facts. Years ago when economy was sought to be used in connection with the schools and a number of schools were closed it was thought that Government was making a terrible mistake. Government has since discovered that mistake, and perhaps in the City of Georgetown you will find no school which has the accommodation it should have in compliance with the Education Code. But apart from that there are places in the country where schools are needed, and so far as I am concerned I feel that every effort should be made to place at the disposal of parents an opportunity to have their children educated, and if new schools are needed—and they are needed—let us have them. I am quite sure this Council will not seek,

upon the flimsy argument advanced by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys), to delete those items.

The hon. Member spoke about additional teachers and suggested that they were not necessary. Does the hon. Member realize that a better average attendance is obtained in the schools now than in the past? Is he aware that more children attend school as the result of an awakening on the part of a number of parents to educate their girls? Does he know or will he realize that because the number of pupils has increased and the average attendance has increased there is need for a greater number of teachers, or is it his wish that the teachers should be overworked and

perhaps suffer from mental strain? If the hon. Member had thought about those things I do not think he would seriously have proposed the deletion of those items. He jumps upon the paltry sum of \$504 for two janitors and says we must not have them; they are non-essentials.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. Member like to conclude his remarks now or when the Committee resumes next week?

Mr. JACKSON: No, sir, I would like to speak for five or ten minutes more.

The Council resumed and adjourned until Tuesday, 10th December, at 11 a.m.